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**Rohit Shah**  
**Mumbai**

N. Ramanathan

## CONTENTS

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No.1

Rama, The Soft - Spoken .....	By S.V.K. ....	5
Nagaswara Music .....	By Dr. Sheik Chinna Moulana .....	9
Indian Karnatic Music & Its Philosophy .....	By Hari Nagabhushanam .....	12
A Unique Akanda Gana Yagna .....	By K. J. Iyengar .....	23
Voice Culture & Indian Tradition .....	By Dr. Usha R. Bhise .....	29
An Evening with Annamacharya Rachanas .....	By Lalitha A. Bharadwaj .....	33
The Forgotten Art of Jalatarangam .....	By Anayampatti S. Ganesan .....	36
Purandra Prabhavam .....	By KINNARI & Mangalam Krishnamoorthy	39
A Bonquet of Melody - Cultural Scsene in Mumbai	By KINNARI & Lalitha A. Bharadwaj	43
The Kitchen Band .....	By Sreekumar .....	47

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IN FOCUS

**SHANMUKHA**

Wishing its Readers, Contributors, Advertisers and Well-wishers a very Happy New Year and Pongal, SHANMUKHA enters its Silver Jubilee Year with solemn Prayers to its presiding deity Lord SHANMUKHA.

Forging ahead with dignity and diligence SHANMUKHA focuses, in this issue, a spectrum of Bhakti Marga and more.

Namarchana of the Supreme is indicative of His glorious attributes - envisioned by Saints and Seers in their songs and verses. Could there be an expression sweeter than "Mrudu Bhashana" and "Sudha Madhurya Bhashana", to extol the virtues of the soft-spoken Rama? A peep into the Rama Bhakta's 'gems' and an Akanda Gana Yagna adds a dimension to the propagation.

Nagaswaram, an auspicious symbol of solemnity and divinity, makes an impact in the sphere of music through the expressions of a Vidwan who lived with it.

Is Music an Art or Science, ? It is neither, but something that transcends both, defies any attempt at categorisation. An exhaustive analysis.

Voice culture is not a modern concept. It is as old as the Vedas, with religious perspective, and a Science that defines and preserves the accent/intonation, very essential for musical enunciation. An exploration through annals of history and literature.

Jalatarangam - a forgotten species? - pours out a poignant plea, whereas 'Kitchen' forges ahead its 'Band' with a bang.

'Rachanas' and 'Prabhavam' expound the rich legacy left by Pada Kavita Pithamaha Annamacharya and Sangeetha Pithamaha Purandara Dasa respectively.

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## RAMA, THE SOFT-SPOKEN

By S. V. K.

Our understanding of God is through the one voice say :  
saguna form well brought out in the puranas and  
epics. The kalyanagunas of God are deemed to  
manifest as the several names and by chanting  
them great bhaktas have shaped their lives. The  
fraternity of bhaktas has thus given us the Nama  
Sankirtana tradition. In reply to Yudhishtira's ques-  
tion in the Vishnu Sahasranamam, Bhishma  
says:

*Yaani naamaani gownaani  
Vikhyaatani Mahaatmanaha  
Rishibihi Parigeetani.....*

(Names of the Supreme which are indica-  
tive of His glorious attributes and sung by  
Seers.)

In the psyche of all great devotees, the  
qualities stand for the name. Sukha Brahman  
has said :

*Gunaprakaasaihi anumeeyate - Bhavan*

(By your glorious kalyanagunas you reveal  
your paratva).

A great Ramabhakta that Sri Tyagaraja is,  
he has taken the cue perhaps from Valmiki. In  
Valmiki's queries to Narada to enlighten him on  
the one person who is perfect in every virtue,  
the very first thing he asks is :

*Konvasmin-saampradam-loke-gunavaan*

(Who in this world is the person who is the  
embodiment of noble gunas?)

Among the several enrapturing qualities that  
Valmiki has spoken of Sri Rama, the noblest is  
his gentleness in speech differently described as  
"Poorva-bhashi, Priyavaadhi, smithapoorvam-  
cha-bhashate" etc. When Dasaratha holds con-  
sultation on crowning Sri Rama, the people with

*Sa-tu-nityam-prasaanthatma  
Mridupoorvam cha bhashathe*

(With great equanimity Rama speaks softly.)

*Buddhimaan-Madhuraabhashi  
Poorvabhaashi-Priyamvadaha*

(High intellectual-with sweet words and  
speaks with great affection.)

This great quality of Sri Rama has enrap-  
tured the mind of Sri Tyagaraja which finds elo-  
quent expression in the Asaveri song "Epaniko  
Janminchitinani". Stating firmly that his existence  
is to sing the praise of Sri Rama he exclaims in  
the Charanam.

*Valmikaadhi-munulu-narulu-ninnu  
Vaminehina-naayaasa-diruna*

(Can the descriptions by Valmiki and other  
sages satisfy me?)

He wants to express his ecstasy to his  
heart's content in his own way. So Sri Tyagaraja  
asks in the Todi song :

*Emani-maatladithivo-Sri Rama  
Evani-manasuku-evidamo-telisi*

(Understanding the moods and the nature  
of each person how did you speak to them  
Sri Rama, to hypnotise them to your will?)

He lists the near and dear, Rishis and oth-  
ers and wonders what exactly was the charm in  
Sri Rama's speech. He must have had visions  
of Sri Rama speaking to every character in the  
Ramayana. It is enough to cite a few. To Kaikeyi  
when she asks Sri Rama to leave for the forest  
Valmiki puts into the mouth of Rama two lofty

statements :

*Karishye-Pratijane-cha-  
Ramo-dwir-naa-bhibhashate*

(I vow to carry out the promise. Rama never indulges in double talk.)

Sri Rama is not only soft spoken, but stands by his word as Sri Tyagaraja says in a Harikambhoji song *Okamaata, Okabanamu*.

The other promise to Kaikeyi is couched in the words :

*Viddhi-Maam-rishibhihi  
tulyam kevalam-dharmamaasthitham*

(Know me to be equal to rishis wedded to dharma).

The most moving episode in the "Ramayana" is when Sri Rama sagaciously convinces his brother to go back to Ayodhya, Bharata asks :

*Kwa-chaanyam-Kwacha-Kshaatram  
Kwa-Jataaha-kwacha paalanam*

(Where is the forest, where is the Kshatriya dharma, where is the forest dweller's matted hair, where is lokapripalanam?)

To which Sri Rama replies to bring him to his way of thinking.

*Kuleenaha-Satva sampannaha-  
Thejaswi-Charitavrataha  
Raajyahethoha Katham-Paapam.  
aachareth Twatvidho-janaha*

(Born in a noble family, much attached to virtues how can one like you induce me to swerve from dharma-my promise to live in forest.)

Ultimately by his convincing words Sri Rama advises Bharata :

*Ayodhyaam-gachcha-Bharata  
Prakrutheen-anuranjaya*

(Go back to Ayodhya and fulfil Dasaratha's dictates to me to go to the forest and to you to rule over Ayodhya and please the people).

Several are instances of Sri Rama's capacity to charm whoever encounters him to submit to his will.

Though Sri Tyagaraja was overwhelmed by Sri Rama's speeches, at the back of his mind was his misfortune in not getting a glimpse of his Ishta Devata. A great poet that he is, he juxtaposes the way Sri Rama has accepted the words of even his enemy's kin to extend him protection. In his Maruva Dhanyasi kirtana he links Sri Rama's soft speech and Vibhishana's good fortune.

*Mridhu-bhashana-nata Vibhishana*

(Soft spoken and prostrated by Vibhishana).

By linking Sri Rama's speech and the benediction to Vibhishana, Sri Tyagaraja leads us to the words of Sri Rama described by Valmiki. While the assembly of monkey leaders speak against entertaining Vibhishana, Rama says :

*Mitrabhavena-samprapatham  
Na-thyajeyam-Katanchana*

(He comes as a friend. I shall not betray him.)

What were the words of Vibhishana pleading to accept his Saranagati?

*Sarvaloka-saranyaaya-Raghavaaya  
-Mahamanaha  
Nivedayatha-maam  
kshipram Vibhishanam-upasthitham*

(Inform Rama, Vibhishana has come to fall at the feet of the protector of the world.)

To which Sri Rama tells Sugriva :

*Aanaya-enam-Harisreshtha  
Dattam-asyaabhayam-maya*

(Sugriva bring him. I have granted protection to him.)

This scene and the ready acceptance of Vibhishana makes Sri Tyagaraja feel Sri Rama does not treat him similarly. In his Devagandhari kriti "Namoralakimpavemi" he makes this explicit.

*Oka-nisicharudanna-maata lorvaka  
Sarananagaa Suka-Vachanamulo-Naadu  
Paluku-lanni-Vibhishanamaa.*

(A Rakshasa, unable to bear the taunts of his brother fell at your feet. Were his words sweet like a parrot's speech to induce you to accept him? Are my words harsh and fearful?)

With a beautiful pun on the word Vibhishana, referring both to Vibhishana and fearful, Sri Tyagaraja thus pleads to the Prince of Ayodhya.

In line with this are his expressions in the Sahana song "Emaanadichchevo" where he asks *Naa-Maatalu-Vinavo*:

(Don't you hear my words?) Again in the song in Raga Panjaram "Sarvabhowma", he says) :

*Muddu-mudduga-maataladinadi  
Munduraga-Sadaa-Vedajendanuchu.*

(Though you had spoken kindly to me earlier you have not given me darshan which grieves me.)

These sentiments of disappointment emerge from his great admiration for Sri Rama as soft spoken and often he has found reasons for Sri Rama's indifference in his own past karma. But when he thinks of Sri Rama as one of charming speech he becomes ecstatic. In the Suddha Desi Kirtana he says "Needu paluke palukura" (Speech means yours is speech).

In the Yadukula Kambhoji song "Nee Dayache" he describes Rama as "Vara-mridhu bhasha" (Sweet tongued) and exclaims "Sudha Maadurya bhashana" (of speech delicious as nectar).

Sri Tyagaraja's Bhakti is so intense that he sways between agony and ecstasy whenever his mind is filled with the great qualities of Sri Rama. For a Bhakta of Sri Tyagaraja's stature what else can be God's grace except condescending to speak to him, particularly a God like Sri Rama whose speech throughout the epic has made everyone willingly abide by His wishes.

Courtesy : "Know Your Thyagaraja"

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## Nagaswara Music\*

By Dr. Sheik Chinna Moulana

I am immensely pleased that the Academy has honoured me by electing me to preside over its 72nd annual conference and receive the title of Sangeeta Kalanidhi which goes with the privilege of presiding over the conference. I accept the important task of presiding over the conference with my head bowed in prayer to Lord Ranganatha whose abode is Srirangam, the town which has been my home for several years. I offer my sincere thanks to the Academy for bestowing this honour on me. I honestly believe that this honour has come my way because of the grace of the Almighty, the blessing of my parents, gurus and elders and the good wishes of my friends and rasikas.

The first Nagaswara Vidwan to receive this honour from the Academy was the late Tiruveezhimizhalai Subramania Pillai in 1957. Then, in 1961, the Academy honoured the late Tiruvidaimarudur Veeruswamy Pillai. Thirty-seven years later, the Academy is honouring another Nagaswara Vidwan and I welcome this fact. I am particularly proud that the Academy is honouring me in the year of the birth centenary of the late Nagaswara Chakravarti Tiruvavaduturai Rajarathnam Pillai. I consider that, in honouring me, the Academy is really honouring the great maestro himself; accordingly I place the honour extended to me at the feet of Nagaswara Chakravarti Rajarathnam Pillai before accepting it myself.

### "University of Karnatak Music"

It will not be an exaggeration to say that the Music Academy has been functioning like a university of Karnatak music. It is proof of the institution's success that the performances and the research-oriented lectures and demonstrations presented by it have secured for Karnatak music a degree of appreciation all over India and abroad. The Academy, moreover, has

helped many artists who are in the forefront today in securing recognition when they were young. I must also mention, with a deep sense of respect, one of the reasons the Academy stands tall today is the great support provided to it by the late T.T. Krishnamachari and the other leaders like him.

### Heritage as a Nagaswara Vidwan

At this time, I wish to bring to your kind attention my Nagaswara music lineage which has a long history. The ancient art of Nagaswara music has been handled by my predecessors for 300 years and I am sure it will be safe in the hands of those of our Parampara who follow me. My predecessors were proficient, not only in music but also in literature and grammar. Conforming to the dictum *Sisur veti pasur veti, veti ganarasam phanihi*, they had acquired the ability to hold *spellbound* children, cows and serpents and the like with their music. Among them, Ongole Sheik Adam Saheb, Rasvari Palem Kasim Saheb, Chilakaluripeta Brothers, Chinna Moula Saheb and Pedda Moula Saheb, the Kommur Brothers, Silar Saheb and Pentu Saheb, Chilakaluripeta Pedda Peeru Saheb and Chinna Peeru Saheb, my guru Sheik Kasim Saheb deserve special mention.

### Sound of Music

Music, which is coeval with man, is not identified with any single race or language. People belonging to different countries, professing different faiths and speaking different languages have contributed - and are still contributing - to the development. Sundaramoorti Nayanar has said that God, listening to our music, forgives our mistakes inasmuch as the music of the Sapta Swaras is the image in sound (Nada Roopa) of God.

\* Presidential address at the 72nd Annual Conference of The Music Academy, Madras.



If we reflect a little on the Ragas which we hear today, their perfection makes us feel thrilled. We must acknowledge then that Todi Raga is 10,000 years old, Kambhoji 10,000 years old and Bhairavi possibly several hundred years old. Such ancient Ragas, following their advent hundreds of years ago, after they were seeded by music savants, nourished and given shape and brought into vogue, and after evolving from one stage to another, today immerse us in the pleasurable sound of music.

### "Ragarathnam Pillai"

Now, I wish to tell you a little about the music of Tiruvavaduturai Rajarathnam Pillai as savoured by me.

The Kauravas had only tasted defeat during the first eight days of the 18-day war between them and the Pandavas, as described in the *Mahabharata*, Sanjaya, seated besides Dhridarashtra, the blind king, was giving a running commentary on the war, as seen by him with his mind's eye. Dhridarashtra interrupted the narration at one point and asked: "Sanjaya! How is it that, although the Kauravas have been experiencing defeat every day, Karna has not used against the Pandavas that powerful device of destruction he acquired with his own efforts? To this question, Sanjaya's response was "Every night, upon returning to our fortifications, our people decide that they would use the deadly device the next day, but they forget all about it when they go into battle the next day. Like this, they forget about the device every day."

Similarly, after listening all night to the variations presented by Rajarathnam Pillai in a concert, we would decide that we would capture them in our own presentations, but then, sure enough our memory of the variations played by Rajarathnam Pillai would become elusive and we would find we could play only the variations we already knew.

I used to wonder, therefore, whether the music of Rajarathnam was beyond the human

ken. The fact of the matter is none was equal to him except himself. In my preception, he was not "Raja'rathnam Pillai; he was 'Raga' rathnam Pillai.

### Nagaswara Bani

Nagaswaram is what makes the culture of the South special. From a long time ago to this day, although many instruments have been in vogue, only the Nagaswaram and its rhythmic twin, the Tavil, have been considered instruments of auspiciousness (Mangala Vadyams) and only the music produced by them held to be auspicious. It is Nagaswara music that stands tallest and sounds most moving. It is Nagaswara music that has created a feeling for music among our people. Bharati said Tamil thunders down the streets. Likewise, it is the Nagaswaram that is responsible for music filling the streets. Everyone, from the connoisseur to the lay person, is attracted by Nagaswara music.

The speciality of classical Karnatak music is that it is Manodharma music, or music of the imagination. This in fact is the high point, the apogee, of our music. The credit for fostering this Manodharma aspect belongs entirely to Nagaswara music. Nagaswara Vidwans have nourished this music by literally pledging their very breath to it and they are still doing so.

Raga Alapana has been, and still is, a special feature of Nagaswara music. There is room for the most expansive Raga Alapanas only in this. When a Raga is being expansively portrayed in the Alapana stage using this instrument, it takes both the artists and the listeners into another realm beyond time and space.

It is Nagaswara music that, by stretching the musician's imagination, gave the idea that the dimensions of the human voice could be enlarged. Vocalists nurtured on Nagaswara music understood this well. The Nagaswara style of presenting music was always a little apart from the style of the Veena (which is a fretted instrument). While the Nagaswara's potential enabled its

exponents to open up their imagination, it can be stated that Nagaswara music helped add a new image and lustre to vocal music. The expansive Raga alapanas presented by Tiruvavaduturai Rajarathnam Pillai, Tiruvengadu Subramania Pillai and the Tiruveezhimizhalai Brothers inspired several vocalists and helped them give a new shape to their concert presentations. When these vocalists, inspired by the Nagaswara Bani, presented Raga alapanas expansively, but rooted in tradition, their fame reached new peaks.

### Music - The Best Medicine

In this land of ours, in which great men of the spirit have nurtured and spread a way of life based on compassion, straightforwardness, generosity and similar virtues, today violence is pervasive. Music is the best antidote to this state of violence. For music helps to dissolve feelings of enmity between individuals and peoples, and promotes unity among them. Therefore, frontline as well as young musicians should, through their efforts make the youth understand our classical music and create enthusiasm for the music among them.

### Appeal

I would like now to present some suggestions, drawn from my experience of many years. These are in the nature of an appeal.

- \* Sampradaya or tradition is most important for music and other fine arts. Proficiency, as well as growth of the art, should be rooted in tradition. I feel particularly strongly that organizations like the Music Academy should make every effort - or continue any effort they

are already making - to promote excellence and preserve traditions of value, even while welcoming change. Change is perhaps inevitable, but if musicians were to be given room to run riot in the name of change, Karnatak music as we know it from great masters of the past would become an 'endangered species'.

- \* Film music directors should endeavour to compose film music with classical flavour, as in years past. I believe that if people's enthusiasm for music is greater in Kerala than in Tamil Nadu, the reason could be the kind of music presented in Malayalam films.

- \* Organisations like the Music Academy should make arrangements to make archival audio and video documentation of the music presented by artists of today, as a bequest to future generations.

- \* It is important for every Nagaswara student to learn vocal music first, since the lyrics of the compositions of our music are unparalleled. Proper knowledge of the Sahitya is a must for Nagaswar artists.

- \* In the olden days, the patrons of music were kings, nobles and persons of wealth. Today it is the responsibility of sabhas to serve as custodians and growth centres. I appeal to the sabhas to give importance to Nagaswara music as well and to encourage Nagaswara artists. Nagaswara music deserves to be presented within the recital hall, not merely as auspicious music outside the halls or in the front foyers. The Music Academy, I feel, should lead from the front in this matter. I also appeal to the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, a Rasika of Nagaswara music himself, to enlarge the support being given to this music, especially by including the teaching of Nagaswara music in all music colleges.

Finally, before I conclude my address, I once again thank Academy President T. T. Vasu and all others connected with this august institution for electing me to preside over this conference and to receive the title of Sangeeta Kalanidhi. I also humbly request all of you to extend your fullest cooperation and help me to discharge my responsibilities successfully.



## Indian Karnatic Music And Its Philosophy

By Hari Nagabhushanam

It is a saying which may be taken as accepted on all hands that this is, in the main, an age of political evolution and material advance. Hence the world's attention is drawn mostly to these all-absorbing topics, and the intelligentsia of every country are engrossed with watching and solving political problems which arise in the course of its national upheaval or with inventing further means of augmenting its economic resources. England, France, America and Japan take the lead in this phase of human activities, and the other so-called civilised countries try to follow their example and profit by their achievements. Art, science, literature and every other department of human thought and action including religion are considered worthy of one's attention and application to the extent that they contribute to the expansion of the arena of political thought and the enlargement of the vision of material progress. Politics and materialism go hand in hand and form interdependent factors in the evolution, so to say, of the present society. Politics based on materialism, and materialism fostered by politics explain the tendency of the present times.

Compared with such a condition of the modern age, the antiquity of all civilised nations on the face of the earth presents a totally different conception of national ideals and had the stamp of real national growth, the underlying principle of the law of evolution. The whole of man's energies, physical and intellectual, was bent upon seeking a solution for the most enigmatic of all riddles - that of life, upon discovering whether there is or is not a superior supervening force, and if so what relation both these entities bear to each other and upon finding out what attributes distinguish one from the other and so on. The ancients seem to have thought that, without a solution of the mystery of a man's own life, his existence was of no avail, even though he was endowed with all the gifts of nature. This domain of man's thought is termed religion or theology

in modern English phraseology. Of these two words the latter represents the idea much better than the former, judging from their derivative meanings, though the former is the more popular of the two expressions. In those early times, religion was the primary theme of life, and such other human pursuits as politics, art, science and literature were considered worth one's while simply because they furthered the cause of religion. Hence spiritual culture and divine wisdom may be said to have predominated over every other branch of man's study and formed the background of all his achievements.

Viewing the condition of the present ideals in the light of the foregoing ideals of life, we shall have to conclude, after due deliberation, that the march of evolution is at present on the wane and the so-called progressive civilisation of the 20th century is more a phantom of the mind than an ascertained fact.

### The Aryan Conception of Religion

Now coming to our Aryan culture, this phase of the ancient human mind goes by the science of denomination of *Dharma Jignasa* as you find it the very first aphorism of the system of *Purvamimamsa* philosophy *Adhatho Dharma Jignasa*. The aphorism lays down in short that it behoves everyone to investigate 'Dharma' and know it perfectly well. This word 'Dharma' comes from a root, meaning 'to hold' and is defined by Jagadguru Shri Shankaracharya in the following terms :-

*Jagathah sthithi karanam pranin an  
Sakshadabhyudaya hethuryassa dharmah*

'Dharma' is that which forms the basic principle for the stability of the universe, and constitutes the direct means for the attainment of *Abhyudaya* (i.e., worldly and heavenly progress) on the one hand, and the realisation of *Nissreyasa* (i.e., eternal happiness) on the other. (1).

Applying this interpretation to the word 'Dharma,' the aphorism enjoins that everyone should investigate and know on what principle the whole of the Universe rests and what he should do and achieve for the attainment of worldly prosperity and heavenly elevation on the one hand, and for the realisation of eternal bliss on the other. No system of religion other than ours can be said to have crystallised such an idea as to the absolute duty of man, and raised the edifice of spiritual culture on this maxim as the foundation.

### The Vedas : The Backbone

That being so, *Bharata Varsha* has come to be known as *Dharma Kshetra* and also as *Kurukshetra* the abode of Dharma and the land of *Kurus* or of *Karma Yoga*-a conception which has baffled the most subtle brains of the present age to recognise and assimilate, as seen from the innumerable conflicting constructions placed upon the teachings of Bhagavan Shri Krishna in His *Geeta*, which begins with those two words, indicating that it is a treatise intended to comprehend the subject covered by those expressions in all its magnitude. If so, it may be asked as to how it has been possible for the Aryans to achieve this world-astounding conception of religion. The answer is that such a conception has become possible for them to behold and realise because the all-supreme God of the universe has thoroughly revealed Himself in His eternal utterings, the Vedas, which are heard and recorded by their ancient seers, the *Maharshis*. Of all the divine revelations given to man, that which is contained in the Vedic lore is considered to be the most perfect as it is admittedly the meeting-ground of all spheres of human action, inaction included.

### Music Derived from the Vedas

Such being the case, the conception of music also has taken its source from the Vedas, and has been developed and perfected from the rules deduced from, and the examples furnished by its compositions, especially the *Sama Vedic* hymns. Music is an inseparable ingredient of

Vedic compositions and this is one of the unique features which go to establish their divine origin. The Vedic culture presents two aspects, the ritualistic going by the name of *Pravritthi Dharma* and the spiritualistic termed *Nivritthi Dharma* and both of them employ music for a higher and nobler purpose, each in its own way.

In this connection, it may be well to advert to the several branches of study in the Aryan literary field and their inter-relation if any. Shri Madhusudan Saraswati in his *Prasthan Bheda* deals about this subject and says :-

"The four *Vedas*, the six *Angas* of *Vyakarana*, etc., the four *Upangas* of *Purana*, *Nyaya*, *Meemamsa* and *Dharma Shastras*, the four *Upa-Vedas* of *Ayurveda*, *Dhanurveda*, *Gandharvaveda* and *Arthashastra*, all these have their purpose in Bhagavan alone, some directly and the others indirectly. Of these the *Vedas* consist of verbal compositions of divine origin and supreme authority and treat of Dharma and Brahma i.e., righteousness and spirituality or God. Thus the *Vedas* serve to evolve Dharma, Artha, Karma, Moksha i.e., righteousness, wealth, sensual appeasement and eternal freedom.

Then the author takes up everyone of the above subjects and explains how it has evolved out of the Vedic lore and has contributed to the better understanding of its spirit by elaboration and elucidation thereof. Hence it follows that the Vedic literature, such as it is, is the fountain source of all knowledge, and every other branch of learning is only what has emerged and fructified from its utterances. So much being said about the arrangement of the various systems of study, we now proceed to the subject in hand.

### Gandharva Veda And Its Scope

Music takes the appellations of *Gandharva Vidya* or *Gandharvam* in our ancient literature, and it is considered to be one of the four *Upavedas* as known already. The above author summarises its purpose thus in his venerable work :-

Similarly the science treating of *Gandharva veda* has been elaborated by Bhagvan Bharata. It comprises three different branches of study, vocal music, instrumental music and dance music

and serves manifold purposes. Its ultimate goal is the worship of God or the Gods on the one hand, and the realisation of unrippled self-consciousness on the other.

We see from what precedes, that the conception of music is a peculiar feature of the Aryan mind, nay, a unique Vedic revelation so to style it, consistently with the traditional Shastraic view, and we will do well to understand what it is as far as it lies in our power and derive all possible benefit.

### Music - An Art or Science?

A conflict of views is taking place abroad as to whether music is an art or a science or both. In this connection, it becomes essential to define what is meant by art and science, and here again we find divergence of opinion. Whatever it is, we may conclude that music in general is treated either as an art such as painting and sculpture, or as a science such as physics and chemistry. The more thoughtful section of erudite people take it as a combination of both. Shri Madhusudan Saraswati's definition of music is couched in language which implies that it is a realisation of something more edifying, which work out the emancipation of the soul from the trammels of repeated births and makes it achieve everlasting bliss. If so, let us make an attempt to understand it, even in a little measure, in accord with the Vedic traditions.

The differentiation of an art from a science and *vice versa* has become visualised to us, the more on account of our contact with English literature. The corresponding expressions in Sanskrit are *Kala* and *Shastra*, and works on music use both of them indiscriminately in reference to it. We find the same thing in the case of some other arts so styled, such as sculpture and painting. If so, does such an uncritical use of the expressions indicate that no such distinction between an art and a science obtains in Sanskrit or that the authors on such subjects were not aware of such differentiation even if others had observed it? It cannot be supposed for a moment that either of the propositions is correct. Subjects such as *Samkhya*, *Tharka* and *Mimamsa*

never take the appellation of *Kala* but go invariably by the name of *Shastra* or *Darshana*. This indicates that Sanskritic authors use these expressions not unwittingly, but with a knowledge of all their import. That being so, we have to make further research into the matter in issue before we launch on any such conclusions.

This necessitates that we should form an idea as to what is an art and what is a science, as generally understood according to Western notions. One states art to be 'the doing of a thing' and science to be 'the knowledge of a thing.' This definition seems to follow more from the derivative meanings attached to the words than from the manner of their application to existing facts. Some others define art as 'something which appeals to our taste or 'sense of beauty' and science as 'consisting in the classification of facts and the recognition of their sequence and relative significance.'

Judging from the way in which we apply the terms, I prefer to define art as a representation or a reproduction of something phenomenal so as to make it appeal to our senses or to our mind, and science as a systematisation of the laws which govern facts and a series of facts which come into existence, being subjected to the law of causation. In other words, whatever expresses the impulses and the passions innate in creation is termed an art, and what formulates and systematises the culture of the human being is a science. The term *Shastra*, the Sanskrit equivalent of the word 'science' means almost the same thing. It comes from a root meaning 'to rule' or 'to correct,' and hence it means a collection of laws which govern existing facts or which serve as a corrective of one's conduct in regard to a certain sphere of his activities. The word *Kala* comes from a root which means 'to shine' and is hence applied to denote such arts as arouse our aesthetic tastes.

Considering music in the light of the foregoing observations, we may conclude that music can either be construed as an art or as a science, view-points differing. As something which

appeals to our sense of hearing or arouses the inner impulses of the mind and deep-laid emotions of the heart, it affords the highest conception of an art. Again as a concatenation of phenomenal sounds arranged and co-ordinated in a specific manner and producing well-defined melodies, it has to be styled as a science, or the scientific aspect of music is the branch of its study which deals with the rules which govern its several poses and which the artist has to obey to steer through its course properly to the satisfaction of the audience.

From what is said above, we see that the generality of theorists have assigned a place to music either in the category of arts or in that of sciences. They seem to take only a superficial view of the matter and do not gauge its inmost realities. The art of painting or sculpture is a representation of forms by the hand of man. The representations are not realities but mere conventional resemblances sometimes expressed in symbols as well. Again the science of physics or chemistry is mostly a collection of laws and their sequence, and deals with dead matter or its forces. So also every art and every science may be traced to technical conventions and natural laws respectively. Now then, will you say that music is a conventional representation of phenomenal facts or a collection of natural laws dealing with lifeless matter or the forces innate therein? No considerate man will say 'aye' to this question.

Music has no conventions about it, since it is a natural product of sounds which permeate the universe. Nor has it any inviolable concern with any such laws of nature, a study of which strains the nerves, because the moment it touches the ear-drum, currents of emotional impulse rush through the mind and throw it into solace automatically. Hence on closer scrutiny we cannot but be convinced that it is neither an art nor a science, strictly speaking, but something transcending both these conceptions and defying our attempts at categorisation.

This transcendental feature of the conception of music is not within the easy reach of ordinary intellects, and hence a tendency has arisen to construe it either as an art or as a science, and technical conventions and artificial rules are framed to bring it in line with such a notion or to curb and correct the wayward fancies of the so-called scholars.

In view of the foregoing remarks, it may be concluded that music has two aspects-conventional and transcendental. It is the conventional aspect of music which engages the world at large, and not the transcendental aspect of it. This latter aspect belongs to the realm of Aryan culture and that alone. Other nations have not been able yet to reach perfection in music at least as an art or as a science, and *a fortiori* it may take centuries for them even to sight the foreshadowings of this transcendental phase.

### The Transcendental Aspect

What is this transcendental aspect of music? The answer is easily put in a few words. It is a most abstruse subject which I may fail to place vividly before the reader. Perhaps I have not understood it perfectly myself. Whatever that is, I wish to present to him the shadowy glimpses I have gathered of it, incongruous as they may prove after all.

The transcendental aspect of music is that which accords with the highest purpose music is said to serve, namely, the attainment of eternal bliss. It is an inviolable rule that the effect is else than the cause itself another phase or form. Hence that kind of music from which eternal bliss emanates must be that which is itself all-blissful; and what is this all blissful entity but *Bhagawan Brahman*. Himself who is described in Upanishad as in the following terms, *Anandam Brahmethi Vyajanath*, ("*Brahman is bliss*"). *Brahman* proper is by himself unmanifest and unqualified. *Aum* is His highest and noblest manifestation with all His attributes of eternity-consciousness and infinity.



and thus this *Aum* has assumed the various phenomenal forms by an inconceivable process of disintegration into elements and their subsequent combination to give the resultant phenomena composed of life and matter-life representing the subjective self as emanation or reflection, in all His essence, of the unqualified *Brahman*, and matter affording the apparently-real objective projected out of His qualified personality, *Maya* becoming transformed as such.

The aim of life according to the Aryan theological doctrines is to investigate, as already stated, on what principle the universe rests, and by what means man attains eternal happiness. The cosmos has evolved out of the all-blissful *Brahman* manifested as *Aum* at the inception, and it therefore has its being in that *Brahman* as such. This solution of the fundamental principle of the cosmos suggests the answer to the next question involved in the subject of our enquiry; and it is this. A person who wishes to attain eternal happiness has to realise that he is the subjective self which is a reflection of the universal self, that he is as such all-blissful as the cosmic self, that the objective matter is only an emanation from or a projection out of the conventional and hence illusive vesture of the *Brahman*, termed *Maya*, and that self-realisation is possible through the medium of the all-pervading, all blissful sound, a manifestation of the *Atman*.

### Self-Realisation Through Medium of Sound

We have to see how sound can be considered the medium of self-realisation. Sound is something more than the effect of vibrations of matter. It is an emanation from *Aum*, the highest manifestation of *Brahman* and it is as such all-blissful as *Brahman* Himself. Bhagavan Shri Krishna says thus in Chapter VII of *Bhagavad Geeta* :

I am the *Rasa* (taste) of water, the light of the sun and the moon, the *pranava* of the *Vedas*, the sound of the sky, and the manliness of man.

This verse occurs in a context where Bhagavan tries to teach His disciple the way to realise Him in the material objects around.

He declares in the previous verse thus :-

Oh ! Dhananjaya ! There is no other cause whatever than Myself (for the universe). As a wreath of diamonds is held up in its thread, the visible world is contained and continued in me."

Laying down a general rule in those words, He has amplified the idea by particular examples and the first-quoted verse furnishes some such examples. Applying the general rule enunciated in the latter verse, the former verse is thus interpreted :-

"Water exists in such a sensuous form because I am the *Rasa* (for tastefulness) thereof; the sun and the moon are considered centres of life because I am the light thereof; the *Vedas* are such supreme compositions because I am the *Pranava* thereof; the sky (or rather the ether) is known to pervade the cosmos, because I am the sound thereof; and man is turned as such, because I am the manliness in him.

Thus every sound has the imprint of divinity about it, and more so the metrical sounds such as we hear when the *Vedas* are recited or when music is produced.

### Nadopasana

Now we have almost solved what is meant by the transcendental aspect of music. It consists in a recognition of the fact that sound is the supreme manifestation of the all-blissful *Brahman*, and he has therefore to be approached and realised through sound as the medium of communion. This mode of spiritual communion goes by the name of *Nadopasana* in technical phraseology. The word *Upasana* literally means 'to be near' and it is applied as conveying the idea of a person coming in nearest contact with God, so near as to get merged in His personality. *Nadopasana* has therefore to be explained as spiritual communion and self-realisation through the medium of sound.

### Pranavopasna

This *Nadaprasana* is of two kinds - *Pranavopasana* practised by *Gnanayogins*, and

*Geetopasana* practised by *Bhaktiyogins* and *Karmayogins*. *Gnanayogins* enter into spiritual communion and realises *Brahmanandam* through the medium of *Pranava-dhyanam* as enjoyed in several *Vedic* texts such as the following :

Oh satyakama ! *Aumkara* is *Para Brahma* and *Apara Brahma* alone (personal and impersonal God). Hence through *Aumkara* as the medium, one who knows this fact realises oneness with either.

By certain *yogic* exercises *Gnanayogins* learn to turn the mind and the senses from the outside objective world of distractions and fix them inwardly on the subjective self of abstraction, meditating upon it in the form of *Aum* as ordained in the *Vedic* text. Then they begin to hear the sweet murmurs of the all-blissful *Aumkara* taking its rise in *Mooladhara Chakara* and pervading the whole of the physical and the mental and the spiritual planes.

As they thus hear the inward tunings of the *Pranava* sound, they are thrown into an ecstatic condition called *Sakritsamadhi* i.e., once realised blissful state. Thus realising the *Pranava* within the self in the first place, they gradually achieve better vision and realise it ever and everywhere, and are lost in unceasing blissfulness termed *Asakritsamadhi* i.e., constantly realised blissful state. Such a *Gnanayogin* is enabled thus to live in a state of ever-enduring unalloyed blissfulness because he beholds the highest manifestation of *Brahman* in every sound he hears. Thus *pranavopasana* heads to self-concentration, thence to self-communion, thence to self-realisation which is identical with *Nirvikalpa Samadhi* i.e. everlasting blissfulness. This is *Pranavopasana* of the *Gnanayogins*.

### Geetopasana

Now let us see what is *Geetopasana* practised by *Bhaktiyogins*. To understand it we have to know, in the first place, who is a *Bhaktiyogin* as distinct from a *Gnanayogin* and *Karmayogin*. A *Gnanayogin* is one who practises certain *Yoga* exercises intended for the control and the con-

centration of the mind and is thereby enabled to detach his mental perspective from the objective world and to focus it upon the internal ego 'Pratyagatman', so as to realise *Samadhi* (i.e., self-consciousness or self-blissfulness). A *Karmayogin* is one who is always engaged in performing the ritual ordained by the *Shrutis* (the *Vedas*), the *Smritis* and the *Puranas*, either for the attainment of worldly and heavenly desires or for the sake of pleasing God, absolutely with no such desires lurking anywhere in his mind. Strictly speaking, one who performs *Karma* with any desire whatsoever is not a *Karmayogin*.

The *Karma* he does is '*Sakama, Karma*' i.e., *Karma* with desire, and he is styled as *Karmatta*. The other who performs *Karma* with no desire whatsoever but to please God is a *Karmayogin* proper, because his *Karma* is intended to effect *yoga* i.e., control of the mind. His *Karma* is known by the name of *Nishkama Karma* i.e., *Karma* with no desires. A *Bhaktiyogin*; on the other hand, is one who tries to silence his mind and attain *Samadhi* (i.e., blissful state of the mind) through intense devotion to God side by side with *Nishkama Karmayoga*. He learns to love God with all his might as one loves his child or wife, and gets attached to Him the more with each day. He realises that God is the creator and Lord of all things tangible and intangible, that He is omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent, that He is as such the '*Pratyagatma*' (i.e., the ego) within, and that everything seen and felt is only His manifestation and nothing else. Hence he (i.e., the devotee) gets enamoured of Him (God) all the more and completely resigns himself to His care and companionship, with the verified conviction that there is none else whom he can approach for the attainment of his only desire i.e., absolute blissfulness. A devotee of this type is styled as *Ananya Bhakta* or *Ekanta Bhakta* and his devotion *Ananya Bhakti* and *Ekanta Bhakti* respectively, the distinction between which is very subtle. Both these kinds of devotion are known by the term *Antaranga Bhakti* as opposed to *Bahya Bhakti* described hereunder.

A *Bahya Bhakta* is one who realises that God is the be-all and the end-all creation as described above in full and constantly engages his *Gnanendriyas* i.e., sense-organs in appreciating God and His *Leelas* (i.e., playful acts) and his *Karmendriyas* i.e., labour organs, in the active service of God and the God-like. Further he keeps company with kindred devotees, leads happy discourses on spiritual problems as a disciple or preaches to others about God and His ways as a teacher. Engrossed in one or all of these ways of divine worship, he derives the utmost pleasure or is merged in blissfulness. His *Bhakti* (i.e., devotion) is named *Bahya Bhakti*, *Bahya Bhakti* literally means devotion expressed in outward acts as well, and *Antaranga Bhakti* devotion centred inwardly.

Devotees of these two types discard everything worldly and love everything divine, and thereby realise *Gnanayoga* resulting in self-realisation and everlasting blissfulness."

In all these stages or forms of *Bhakti*, the devotee employs *Geetam* i.e., song, as the preeminent medium of self-concentration. When he utters words by the mouth, you find they come out automatically set to music, as it were. When he muses within himself, you can perceive he is musicing to himself, if I may so style it. His music may not be similar to that of the so-called scholar. It may be wanting in the technique of the art as we understand it. He may not know the *Sa, Ri, Ga, Ma* of music nor the various forms of time keeping thereof. Nevertheless, there is music in every word which proceeds from his mouth, in every idea he expresses, and in every gesture he makes; and this is real music because it lulls the hearers into a repose.

One Thatari Rangadas who lived around 'twentie's at Masulipatam was a living example of the foregoing spiritualists. He was not an educated man in the sense in which we understand the phrase, and yet he always delivered his sermons arranged in *extempore* metrical composition.

tions automatically set to music. The names of Ramadas, Kabirdas, Tukaram, Tulsidas, Tyagaraja and a host of similar devotees outlive creation, and they afford the best instances of established reputation for my conclusions.

Hence it becomes manifest that, *Bhaktas* employ *Geetam* as an essential means of centralising their spiritual thoughts and as an assured source of bliss to themselves and to their following. They cling on to this kind of self-enjoyment and congregational entertainment through the medium of *Geetam*, even after they become accomplished *Gnanayogins*. This proves that *Geetam* is not only a means but an end in itself. That *Geetopasana* bears such fruit is borne out by the testimony of Shri Krishna's utterance in the following oft-quoted verse :-

"Oh Narada ! I do not reside in *Vyunkta* nor in the hearts of the *yogins*, nor in the sun, but I am present where my devotees sing (my praises)."

Just as every sound musical or unmusical throws a *Gnana-yogin* into endless raptures, every musical sound finished or unfinished enchants a *Bhakti-yogin* and merges him in ecstasy. Thus *Geetam* leads to self-concentration, thence to self communion and thence to self-realising, which is the same as *Nirvikalpa Samadhi*. Such is *Geetopasana* i.e., spiritual communion through the medium of *Geetam*.

#### Geetopasana of Karmayogins

A *Gnanayogin* or *Bhaktiyogin* above treated of belong to the category of persons who follow *Nivriti Dharma* sometimes called *Gnanamarga* and we have seen that they attain *Nirvikalpa Samadhi* through the medium of sound, the former through *Pranavopasana* and the latter through *Geetopasana* as stated briefly by Madhusudana Saraswathy in his *Prasthan Bheda*.

Now coming to the case of the followers of *Pravriti Dharma* or *Karmamarga* or *Karmayoga*,

you will find that music has a noble part to play in the programme of work. The Vedas themselves are musical compositions as already stated, and the *Samavedic* hymns are such in a much greater degree. The recitation of the Vedas, especially the *Samavedic* hymns forms a primary factor of Vedic ritual, and the Veena is employed as an accompaniment in certain functions. Again certain *Upasanas* such as *Pranavodgetopasana* which accompany the ritual imply that they have to be performed in a musical manner, the Vedic ritual being mostly addressed to the minor Gods, Indra, Varuna, etc. You find that music is employed to please them in *Shrout Karma*. So also in many forms of *Smartha Karma* music has a very important place to occupy for the purpose of pleasing God, worshipped in the form of the several deities for whom they are intended. Thus we see that *Pravriti Dharma* or *Karma Marga* has assigned a pre-eminent place to music in its observances and its adherents are able to satisfy the presiding deities all the better for the use of music in their functions. The deities being so pleased, the *Karmayogins* achieve their objects such as *Satya Suddhi* i.e., absolute purity of mind, and *Devata Sarupyamu* i.e., likeness of the deities according to the ideals they set before themselves in the course of their service.

From the above discussion, it may fairly be inferred that transcendental music ranges in three grades or types according to merit-*Pranavopasana* of *Gnanayogins*, *Geetopasana* of *Bhaktiyogins* and that of *Karmayogins*. The first two types led to self-emancipation sooner or later, and the third makes for the spiritual progress of the votary.

#### Conventional Music

Now let us know what is meant by conventional music. It is that kind of music which obtains credit with the world at large either as an art or a science. We Aryans generally know it by the word *Sangeetam*. Works of music define it as composed of three elements- *Bhava*, *Raga* and *Tala*. *Bhavam* may be taken to mean ideas, as generally understood, and emotion as truly interpreted. *Ragam* is defined as a combination of *Swarams*, a *Swaram*

being so named as it automatically pleases the hearer's heart. *Talam* refers to time keeping. Such a definition of music, of course, covers as well the three types of transcendental music above commented upon but the three conception of *Bhava*, *Raga* and *Tala* are found therein, their *Sukshma Sthithi*, i.e., subtle form, whereas in conventional music they become perceptible in their *Sthula Sthithi*, i.e., gross form. The spirit of subtle things, as everybody concedes, is inconceivable to ordinary minds, and hence the generality of people are not able to discern the splendour and grandeur of transcendental music.

Knowing this, our Maharshis have discovered such forms of sounds wherein the all-blissful aspect of *Brahman* becomes manifest even to the untutored mind and named them *Sa, Ri, Ga, Ma, Pa, Dha, Ni*, as they occur in nature.

Just as the sun and the moon manifest the all-resplendent attribute of the all pervading *Brahman* in such a way as everyone may comprehend its glory beyond doubt, the seven musical notes above named manifest the all-blissful aspect of the all-pervading sound so as to bring it home to each and everyone in all its vividness. The reader will appreciate the truth of the above remarks all the better when he understands the real import of the arrangement of the scale of musical sounds. The scale consists of twenty-two sounds called *Shrutis* arranged into seven periods of *Sa, Ri, Ga, Ma, Pa, Dha, Ni*. Each period consists of several notes and they are pronounced as *Sa, Ri, Ga, Ma, Pa, Dha, Ni*; according to the periods in which they occur. The word *Shruti* means 'that which is heard' and covers every sound produced; and hence it follows that *Shrutis* are innumerable; but every such sound is not a *Swaram* because a *Swaram* is such that it should please the hearer's heart the moment it touches his ears. Such *Swarams* are those which are produced in certain relativity to a given starting sound called *Adhara Shruti*. So every *Shruti* becomes a *Swaram* only when it occupies a relative position from a given *Adhara Shruti*.

\* Vide, Chapter X of Bhagvad Geeta, Verses 8,9 and 10

## Modern Science and Music

Modern scientists of course define a musical sound as one produced by a regular number of vibrations, and noise as produced by an irregular number of vibrations. Regularity and irregularity are only relative conceptions of the ordinary human intellect, and you will be convinced on better research that there is nothing irregular in nature, and that regularity is the dominating principle of the cosmos.

My discussion above on *Shrutis* and *Swarams* lays bare the wrong conception of the scientists as regards the definition of musical sounds. The invention of the gramophone supports my views still further. It records all sorts of sounds - the so-called musical as well as unmusical sounds. If really the so-called unmusical sounds have no regularity about them, they cannot be produced and reproduced in the same manner. Hence the scientist's definition must be taken to be deduced from general notions of relativity and he does not make an accurate statement on the matter with a sound mastery of the cosmic theory.

Again our Maharishis have recognised that concepts formed out of words, and time-keeping kept by the hand can be easily grasped by men of ordinary equipment and have prescribed the same as constituting *Bhavam* and *Talam*. *Bhavam* literally means 'existence' and implies the *Satya* aspect i.e., the eternity aspect of Brahman. The derivative meaning of *Ragam* is 'pleasingness' and it connotes the *Gnana* aspect i.e. the all-conscious or the all-blissful *Shruti* aspect of Brahman. *Talam* comes from a root-meaning 'time' and it signifies the '*Ananta*' aspect i.e., the infinity aspect of Brahman. Our Maharishis perceived that these three aspects of Brahman, discernible though they are in every phase of sound, and in every atom of matter evolved therefrom, are vividly manifest in verbal concepts, *Swara* combinations and timekeeping, assuming the names of *Bhava*, *Raga* and *Tala* respectively, and have achieved a system of music on these premises to please all grades of people.

This is the conventional system of music as opposed to the transcendental system above described, wherein the three elements of music representing three aspects of *Brahman* overlap one another, as it were, and become unrecognisable by the lay mind.

### Purpose of Conventional Music

The purpose of conventional music is twofold-first. It is prescribed as a means to achieve access to the sphere of transcendental music, and secondly, it can be utilised as a source of worldly happiness which consists in the appeasement of earthly desires. I may be pardoned when I say that the majority of present day musicians and hearers have the latter purpose in view and not the former.

The next question is, how conventional music secures access to transcendental music. In all human actions, you find three agencies working - the mind, the tongue and the body. The ultimate object of transcendental music is to attain *Nivriti*, i.e., inaction resulting in and following from self-realisation. *Nivriti*, which leads to self realisation is what should be achieved by a perfect control of the above three agencies of human action, and their undivertible concentration upon *Brahman* seated within and without oneself. We have seen already how in transcendental music, these agencies get centred upon a spiritual plane either inward or outward and almost coalesce into a unified product of self-communion. In conventional music, you have the three agencies working for a common goal, *Bhavam* representing the mind, *Raga*, the tongue, and *Talam*, the body. If the common purpose be to gain approach to transcendental music, the agencies have to be so wielded as to take you to its portals by continued and sustained efforts for their concentration. Once we reach the avenues of transcendental music through conventional music, it is no longer conventional but more and more transcendental, and leads you to absolute blissfulness all the sooner. On the other hand, if the common purpose for which the three agencies are employed pertains to

worldly advance, you begin to secede from God by degrees and finally get landed in inextricable shoals of self-annihilation.

### A Word of Explanation

The reader may question me how it is that I have not touched the subject proper in spite of so long an expatiation on introductory matter as it appears to be. The answer is not far to seek. He will be mistaken if he considers the preceding observations as constituting a prelude to the subject of investigation. The Aryan system of

music has two main branches, the Hindustani and the Karnatic. It is my honest conviction, not based upon any surmises of a layman but upon due deliberation worthy of a practical artist, that the Karnatic school has preserved the individuality of the Aryan conception of music intact much better than its sister school. The Hindustani school is more a hybrid rather than a purely natural product, owing to its assimilation of a foreign system, that of the Muslims, to a fault. Hence everything I have stated above appertains to Karnatic music in its philosophical aspect.

-Courtesy : " Music Mirror "

## Spark of Divinity

*Music is a part of the very weft of civilization that is woven into strands of the primitive and immutable instincts of mankind. Indeed, a combination of words, word images and sounds, which, in the ultimate analysis, constitutes the bare skeleton, of Music has had a witchery that is older than witchcraft, and an appeal that has tingled humanity since the very dawn of creation. If we may put it in a 'different way, Music is something bigger than melody, bigger than harmony, bigger than the Muses themselves; it is the highest expression of that spark of divinity within us which alone distinguishes us from the rest of God's work. The grandest incandescence of this spark is in those who create, I refer to those who make Music-whether in song or in tune, whether in words or on instruments. But all of us-even the humblest and the least cultured amongst us-throb with inexpressible longings beneath the stimulus of Music. There are chords to our hearts which are more sensitive than those of the instruments; and there is seldom amongst created beings anyone whose heart-strings do not vibrate with joy or suffering when a master's hand plays the note*

*Music, therefore, is the common legacy of humanity. Different cultural backgrounds have evolved different techniques and various schools. For similar reasons, music has also subdivided itself into denominational and geographical units, But Music in the wider sense is as universal as mankind itself.*

- Shankar.

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## A Unique Akanda Gana Yagnam

By K. J. Iyengar

The Sri Sadguru Sangeetha Samajam at Purasawalkam, Chennai, was brought into being in 1955 as a result of the merger of three different institutions, viz., the Radhakrishna Bhakta Jana Sabha, the Indian Fine Arts Society and a splinter group of the latter.

The moving spirits behind this great achievement were Violin Vidwan T.R. Ratnavelu, M.V. Duraiswamy Iyengar, P.D. Chittibabu, Prof. P. Sambamurthi, Sangitha Bhushanam R. T. Srinivasan, P.P. Govindan and others.

The main objective of these groups was the celebration of the Annual Aradhana of Saint Tyagaraja; and ever since its inception, the Samajam continues to do it on a grand scale every year. Only the venue changed from the Anjaneya Temple to the Srinivasa Perumal Temple is Vellala Street at Purasawalkam.

Thanks to the untiring efforts of the late M. V. Duraiswamy Iyengar, he could muster the support of a galaxy of Vidwans like Sangitha Kalanidhis Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer, Musiri Subramaniya Iyer, K.V. Narayanaswami, N. Ramani, T. K. Govinda Rao, Sangitha Bhushanam Therazhundur, V. Srinivaschari, Srirangam V. S. Krishnamurthy Rao, G. N. Dandapani, B.V. Raman & Lakshmanan, P.S. Narayanaswamy, Calcutta Krishnamurthy, A.Sundaresan, S. Nataraja Iyer, M. N. Kandaswamy, P.K. Madurai, Ramnad A. Eswaran, Palghat V. A. Sundaram, Sengottai M. Sundararajan, Smt. Kalpakam Raman, J. Ganapathy, D. Damodaran, Nanganallur V. Ramaathan, M. V. Udaya Shankar, T. N. Sriraman, D. Govindarajan, B. Karthikeyan, S. Venkataraman, R. Krishnamurthy, etc., who took very active part at various periods as office-bearers of this great Samajam run solely by the Sangitha Vidwans themselves.

Of course, the redoubtable Prof. P. Sambamurthy had a big hand in the ushering in of the Samajam and was also its first President. Another stalwart Dr. R. Krishnaswami (endearingly known as Dr. R.K.), an ardent Tyagaraja Bhakta, brought into play his enormous energy and influence to bear on the steady growth of the Samajam over the years with admirable devotion and religious fervour.

As a part of the Silver Jubilee celebrations, the Samajam organised, besides its usual one day Akandam, music concerts in every nook and corner of Chennai city during the period 6-2-1980 to 2-3-1980 (25 days).

Computed from the Annual Aradhana in 1956 at Purasawalkam, Chennai and from the Annual Jayanthi Akandam at Thiruvaiyyaru, the Fiftieth Golden Jubilee Akanda Ganam took place from 28-2-1986 to 2-3-1986 at the usual venue of Srinivasa Perumal Temple at Purasawalkam.

The programme consisted of singing non-stop Tyagaraja Kritis for fifty hours (without repetition of any Kriti once sung, with no Raga Alapana and Swaraprastharas). About 497 Kritis were covered in this Golden Jubilee Akandam.

The unique Diamond Jubilee Akanda Gana Yagna was rendered continuously for sixty hours from 7.00 a.m. on Friday, the 1st February 1991 to 7.00 p.m. on Sunday, the 3rd February 1991. Here again, the cardinal principle of no repetition of an already sung Kriti, nor any Raga Alapana, or Swaraprastharas, was scrupulously adhered to. This Yagna was performed on an unprecedented scale under the guidance of a Special Committee constituted for this purpose consisting of Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, as President, T. K. Govinda Rao as Secretary and the ubiquitous Sri R. Yagnaraman as Convener.



This sixty hour non-stop marathon covered 573 Tyagaraja Kritis (out of the nearly 700 published) sung by about 55 Sangitha Vidwans and Vidushis, viz., Sukhanya & Sarada (9 Kritis), Geetha Ramasubramaniam & Uma Prabhakar (10), Sankari Natarajan (11), Nirmala Sundararajan (10), Vijaya Murthy (10), Subhasri Mani (9), Kalpakam Raman (10), Jaya Krishnan (10), Sita Rajan (10), Mangalam Sankar, Malini Rajan & Gauri Gokul (9), K. S. Krishnamurthy (9), Vaigal Gnanaskandan (10), Trichur V. Ramachandra (9), G. S. Mani (12), Seerkazhi Jayaraman (10), V. Sundaresan (10), Suguna Varadachari (9), Rukhmani Ramani (10), Suguna Purushottaman (9), T. Muktha (10), Rita Rajan (11), Padma Narayanaswamy (9), Charumathi Ramachandran (12), Mani Krishnaswami (10), C. Saroja & C. Lalitha (9), Sangitha Kalanidhi K. V. Narayanaswamy (10), Srirangam V. S. Krishnamurthy Rao (10), V. R. Krishnan (9), O. S. Thyagarajan (10), S. P. Ramh (10), Thiruppunthuruthi Venkatesan (10), S. P. Viswalingam (10), K. V. Krishnan (10), Sangitha Bhushanam T. V. Srinivasachari (10), Seetharaman & Bala (9), Chengalpet Ranganathan (10), Thanjavur S. Kaiyanaraman (11), Thiruvengadu A. Jayaraman (10), Allepey P. Venkatesan (10), A. Sundaresan (9), T. P. Vaidyanathan (9), P. S. Narayanaswami (13), Sangitha Kalanidhi T. M. Thyagarajan (10), B. V. Raman & Lakshmanan (10).

The names of songs and their Ragas have not been given for lack of space, but it must be noted that each one of the above artistes did include one or two rare Kritis in their rendition. It is commendable that the Ramakrishna Bhajana Mandali came out with twenty pieces. Likewise, the Trichy Sadguru Samajam presented in two long sessions of four hours each and that too, at the wee hours of 2nd and 3rd February 1991 about eighty songs in all by their Goshti Ganam of Divyanamam, "*Prahlada Bhakthi Vijayam*" and "*Nowka Charitra Kritis*". Thus, the cake must go to this Trichy Samajam for taking away a good deal of the strain of the Akandam at odd hours.

The notable absentees who earlier volunteered to participate with their specified quotas of songs but could not do so for various unavoidable reasons were : T. K. Govinda Rao (who had to be away in America on a professional tour), Needamangalam V. V. Subramaniam, Nanganallur Ramanathan, Vairamangalam Lakshminarayanan, Smt. Vegavagini Vijayaraghavan and finally Sangetha Kalanidhi D. K. Jayaraman who unfortunately expired earlier. (Of course, his able daughter Sukhanya made good his 12 kritis besides her own quota as mentioned above).

In this connection it is noteworthy that at very short notice Kumari Durga, V. L. Janakiraman, M. V. Duraiswamy Iyengar and a few other knowledgeable present completed the scheduled songs allotted to the absentees which included some rare Kritis.

It is also heartening to find that Vidwans Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer (10), T. M. Thyagarajan (50) and Lalgudi Jayaraman (20) took great pains to teach these rare Kritis not in current circulation to their disciples and others eager to learn for rendering at the Akandam such to the delight of the rapturous audience which this writer was privileged to witness.

Not content merely with celebrating the Annual Aradhana of Tyagiah at its place of birth, Purasawalkam, since its inception in 1955, and busying itself with conducting Akanda Gana Yagnas on its Silver Jubilee in 1980 and its Golden Jubilee in 1986, the Samajam is also engaged in various other musically constructive activities. They have been organising Akandams at Thiruvayyaru and Thiruvavur every year.

They also arrange group singings of Tyagaraja compositions on every Panchami day at Purasawalkam. Whenever a Bahula Panchami falls on a holiday, the singing session is conducted as far as possible in one or another of the places of pilgrimage visited by the Saint such as Kovoor, Thiruvottinur, Kancheepuram, Tirupathi,

Srirangam, etc. On such occasions the Kshetra Kritis dedicated and sung by the Saint in praise of the presiding deity are rendered by the musicians.

The Samajam has provided funds for the repairs, renovation, Mahasamprokshana and Kumbabhishekam of the Saint's Samadhi at Thiruvaiyyaru, and monthly performance of Panchami Aradhana also at Thiruvayyaru.

The Samajam has further put up marble-stone slabs containing the correct text of Swamiji's Kritis not only at Thiruvayyaru but the other concerned Kshetras. The selfless dedication of the late Srirangam Sundaram Iyer, a retired mail sorter, in this regard can never be forgotten.

All this would not have been possible without the unflinching support, enthusiasm and encouragement of the numerous Sangitha Vidwans in particular and music-lovers and munificent donors in general. It has been an enviable cooperative endeavour of wide dimensions not seen anywhere else.

The Samajam has also brought out a dozen and more publications covering Srirangam, Lalgudi, Kovoor, Thiruvottriyur and Thiruvayyaru Kshetra Pancharatna Kritis, Tirupathi and Kancheepuram Kshetra Kritis and Ghana Raga Pancharatna Kritis with notations by Sri Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, Lalgudi Jayaraman and T. K. Govinda Rao who, incidentally, accounts for more than a moiety of those Kritis.

Apart from the Samajam, the financiers for these publications were Sri N. Ramaswami Iyengar of the '*Swadesamitran*', Dr. R. Krishnaswamy, Bombay Sisters C. Saroja and C. Lalitha, R. Suryanarayanan and the disciples of Mndangam Maestro Palani Subramaniya Pillai. Interestingly enough, these publications were released at the respective Kshetras by distinguished personalities during the Saint's Aradhana days.

The Samajam has also distributed Tyagiah's attractive and authentic pictures for daily worship by his devotees.

The crowning glory of the Samajam is the publication in a single volume in Tamil of 675 Tyagaraja compositions with authentic Sahityas, meanings and an index of proper pronunciations which has proved an invaluable guide to the vast majority of the professional and amateur musicians, students and rasikas who are mostly Tamilians not much conversant with Telugu.

This book entitled '*Sri Tyagarajaswami Keerthanaigal*' was released by President V. V. Giri at the Samadhi of the Saint in Thiruvayyaru during the Aradhana festival in 1967. The cost of this publication was borne by that generous couple Smt. M. S. Subbulakshmi & T. S. Sadasivam.

The labour of love bestowed by the indefatigable T. S. Parthasarathy is writ large on every page of the volume from cover to cover. It was entirely due to that veteran Dr. Krishnaswamy's single-minded dedication to Tyagaraja that enabled the Samajam to gain this remarkable achievement.

The Publications Committee of the Samajam consisting of Semmangudi Sri Srinivasa Iyer (Chairman), Sangitha Kalanidhi K. V. Narayanaswamy, T. M. Thyagarajan, T. K. Govinda Rao and Lalgudi Jayaraman has been entrusted with the important responsibility of preparing the authentic notation and bringing out in print and tape as soon as possible not only the 573 Tyagaraja Kritis covered (and haphazardly taped) during the sixty-hour Diamond Jubilee Akandam but also all other known Kritis of Tyagaraja which number in all about 700 compositions. It is a pity that hardly 300 of these are currently in circulation.

Prior to this seminal publication of the Samajam, there was another equally striking publication entitled '*The Spiritual Heritage of Tyagaraja*' containing 565 of the Saint's compositions with text in Devnagari and English translation of each song done by that indomitable Bhagavata Sri C. Ramanujachariar, embellished by an excellent introductory thesis on Tyagaraja

by the erudite Prof. V. Raghavan and a Foreward from Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, published in 1958 by the Ramakrishna Mutt, Chennai.

Another slender volume containing unpublished 26 'rare Kritis' of Tyagaraja unearthed and offered by Thiruvayyaru Sri Subramaniya Bhagavata, belonging to the direct Sishya Parampara of the Saint, was published in 1968-69 by Sri Tyaga Brahma Mahotsava Sabha, Thiruvayyaru. The Varnamellus for these kritis were done by Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer, Srivanchiyam Ramachandra Iyer and Thiruvayyaru Gopalakrishnan.

There is thus a great deal of confusion about the authenticity and the exact number of extant Tyagaraja compositions out of about 24,000 kritis that Swamiji is credited with. It is a fact that there have been a lot of interpolations periodically over the years. And here comes the authoritative voice of the late lamented Sriraman R. Rangaramanuja Ayyangar who was a walking encyclopaedia of Karnatak Music. He was a legend in his days and single-handedly brought out his monumental '*Kritimani Malai*' in four volumes (3,200 pages) containing 690 Tyagaraja Kritis, 400 Dikshitar compositions, Kshetragnya's 100 padams, Syama Sastri, Subbaraya Sastri, Pallavi Gopala Iyer, Patnam Subramaniya Iyer, Kumara Ettendra and Anayya's kirtanas, 44 Javalis, 14 Thillanas, totalling 1,450 kritis besides Laya Tharangini and modern Swara Tala Vistharas. This was the earliest publication of all, celebrating the Bicentenary of Tyagaraja Swamigal in 1947.

The first two volumes of '*Kritimani Malai*' have been exclusively devoted to Tyagaraja offering authentic and correct texts of 685 of his Kritis. Rangaramanuja Ayyangar's inimitable eternal contribution to Karnatak Music is his meticulous evolution of a most modern, sophisticated and scientific system of notation indicating clearly subtle nuances of Moorchanas, laying bare the intricate gamakas and underlining the rhythmic high points of the melody and music of Tyagaraja. The same is the case with the other two volumes also. Meanings, contextual

comments, elaborate explanations, biographical sketches of the Vaggeyakaras, copious illustrations, meet the careful reader, discerning musicians and diligent student at every page of '*Kritimani Malai*'.

Ayyangar's comprehensive '*History of Carnatic Music*', a classic, is but a standing testimony to his incomparable research and scholarship as a musician-musicologist.

All told, the towering '*KRITIMANI MALAI*' is a compact portable library of Karnatak Music easy to carry in a briefcase which must find its place in every home of the musicians, students and rasikas besides every library - public and private - worth its name.

Rangaramanuja Ayyangar writes :

"A working knowledge of Telugu, a thorough grasp of Carnatic rhythm, an insight into canons of composition acquired from a wide repertoire, and a mastery of the technique of advanced notation, are the *sine qua non* for a study of Tyagaraja. Reliance on Karna Parampara, the ear and rote method of learning, and apathy to the use of written material can only promote stagnation and decay. A healthy rivalry should spur musicians to popularise new songs of Tyagaraja that lie quite handy these days. The echo of new songs on every hand will electrify the atmosphere and revive the flagging interest in classical music. It were but fitting in this context, to recall that, during the short period of twenty years that Kancheepuram Naina Pillai dominated the world of Karnatak Music, he brought to light more than two hundred Kritis of Tyagaraja. He would not accept another recital unless he was ready with at least two new Kritis of Tyagaraja to be rendered in that performance.

The crying need of the hour, therefore, is a band of selfless votaries of the art like Naina Pillai who will preserve the music of Tyagaraja in the best traditional manner and propagate it along with his philosophy, with genuine zeal, competence and humility. There can be no better homage to Tyagaraja Swamigal than this."

It is our sincere prayer to Sri Tyagaraja that there would surge forward a good crop of worthy students and practitioners as able and willing to receive as Sri Ayyangar was to give - in the interests of learning the music and spreading the

message of Saint Tyagaraja who has no equal in the annals of Karnatak music - an Avatara Purusha indeed. He has shown us all an easy path to Moksha - singing our way to salvation.

Swamigal and conduct group singing of at least a few Devarnamas and Utsava Sampradhaya Kritis daily.

To conclude, the Sri Sadguru Sangeetha Samajam, Chennai, has a very ambitious programme for the future. They want to build a tape library of all available Kritis of the Saint and in course of time also establish an Institute of Tyagaraja Studies. The Samajam prays that every home should have a portrait of the

It would be a fitting finale to end this essay with earnest prayers to the Almighty to make the many dreams of the Sri Sadguru Sangeetha Samajam for the future come true, and also a fervent appeal to the innumerable music institutions, schools, colleges, universities and sabhas, big and small - far and near - in India and abroad, to emulate this wonderful Samajam to the extent possible.

## Tanpura

The conception that Taan-Patterns inevitably return to tonal frequency of Tan-Pura (is it due to this occurrence that the 'Tanpura is called Tan-Pura; meaning the instrument which gives out frequency where Tan completes?) is not totally true. This occurrence was more noticeable in artists of previous generation. Whereas in present Indian artistes' musical taan patterns have become more complex and this occurrence is not readily discernible.

This phenomenon might be reminiscent of 'Moorchchanas' of olden times. This is looking at it from historical point of view.

Second explanation is aesthetical. It is well established fact that two notes of the same frequency when played at the same time will merge with each other completely and fully and will create sense of relaxation, peace of mind and repose. This is called perfect harmony. This effect is created when 'Sa' of the artist completely merges with Tonal frequency of Tanpura. It is the characteristic of human mind that if a thing is repeated continuously the satisfaction that is derived out of it goes on reducing, till a stage is reached when abhorrence is created. Due to this psychological fact the most harmonious 'Sa' also when repeated continuously creates what is called monotony. And to relieve this sense of monotony the artist has to deviate from the most harmonious combination and create 'contrast'. In music this is effected by creating a taan or Alap pattern. After some period of creation of contrast, human mind gets fed up of contrast and desire to create harmonious combination is again aroused. This in music is done by returning to Tonal frequency. When thus balance in contrasting and harmonious elements of artistic expression is achieved, aesthetically pleasing combination is created."

A. L. Patwardhan  
in "Music Bulletin"

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## VOICE CULTURE AND THE INDIAN TRADITION

Miss Usha R Bhise, M.A., Ph.D

In the third issue of the University of Bombay *Music Bulletin* dated 27<sup>th</sup> March, 1970, the Editor has referred to some objections raised against the discipline of Voice Culture. In the following paragraphs, I propose to examine one of them, which states that this science may not prove useful to Indian Music. I am only trying to show that Voice Culture is not alien to the Indian tradition of music, that had its roots in the religious incantations.

I

It may sound startling that the basic principles of Voice Culture are embodied in the Sanskrit works on Phonetics, Grammar and Yoga, some of these dating back to more than 2000 years. Initially, these studies were undertaken for a religious purpose. Phonetics, 'Siksha' had been called a limb of the Veda-s in ancient India. The preservation of the Vedic texts seems to be the sole aim, which necessitated the study of this branch. As the art of writing was unknown for a pretty long time, the only means of preserving the sacred literature to posterity was oral transmission. Accuracy in the oral transmission ultimately depended on the correct pronunciation and, hence, we come across observations on the human organs of speech, their role in the production of vowels and consonants as well as the production of correct intonations. It may be added here, that intonations, more popularly termed as the accents, 'svara' is an inevitable feature of Vedic recitation. The accents being intimately linked with Grammar and Semantics, a shift in the accent meant a change in the meaning. In order to avoid such consequences, a necessity for the preservation of the accents was acutely felt.

A further light may be thrown on this point, when looked at from a religious angle. In the Vedic age idol-worship was not in vogue. It was believed that the different gods were embodied in the different hymns, which were sacred to them. The desired god presented himself at the recitation of the correctly accented hymn. An incorrectly accented hymn meant a defective

representation of the deity, who was not potent enough to grant the boon. Thus, in addition to the preservation of the syllables, the preservation of the accent received considerable attention. The Vedic accent is a musical one in the sense that it calls for the rise and fall in tone. Hence, instruction in accents went hand in hand with the training of voice. This is how in the works on *Siksha* we come across observations which belong to the field of Voice Culture.

The authors of these works show a full awareness of the fact that breath plays a vital role in phonation

(1) Pingala in his *Vedangasiksha*<sup>1</sup> explains that, when the personal soul wishes to convey something by speech, the mind strikes at the fire that lies around the navel and that this fire pushes up the breath. This statement may be matched against the modern principle of Voice Culture viz., that the abdominal bulk, which pushes against the diaphragm, proves helpful to the breath, which forms the support of voice. The statement about the abdominal fire pushing up the breath also lays emphasis on the role of abdominal muscles in bringing about phonation

(2) The interconnection between the abdominal muscles, breath and voice is made clear also in the theory of *Sphota*, which forms the central tenet of the philosophy of Indian Grammar.<sup>2</sup> Stripped of its philosophical colouring, the theory of *Sphota* is nothing but an exposition of how the breath manifests itself into speech or word 'sabda', that forms the basis of grammatical investigations. The *Sphota*, which is at the basis of human voice is divisible into two parts: internal and external. The internal phase is the life-breath passing over to the vocal organs and the external phase is the activity of those organs.

(3) The classification of speech into the categories of *para pasyanti*, *madhyama* and *vaikhari* illustrates the point that a certain activity of inter-

1. V 6

2. *Mahabhasya* of Patanjali vol. I p. 181, ed. Keilhorn, Bombay, 1892 *Vakyapadya* of Bhartrhari I. 49

3. Nagojibhatta *Vaiyakaranasiddhanta-laghumanjusa* Benares, Chowkhamba sk. Ser. I, 1925 p. 172 ff

-nal organs precedes phonation. The starting point is the para, which originates in the *māladharacakra*, situated below the lower end of the spinal column. From this point, 'nadabindu', the sound, is pushed up towards the navel by the internal breath. The navel is the seat of the second stage, known as the *Pasyanti*. Both the stages are said to be imperceptible. The third stage viz, the *madhyama* is perceptible only to the insight of a *yogin*. The *madhyama* originates above the diaphragm, which is described as a lotus<sup>4</sup> of eight petals, turned downwards, lying between the abdomen 'udara' and the chest 'uras'. At the time of phonation it turns upwards. 'Vaikharī', the last phase, is produced by the vocal organs.

(4) The *Rgvedapratishakhyā* of Sāunaka at 1.4 tries to present the relation of breath and speech in the terminology of the sacrifice. According to this view, the breath comes to be sacrificed into the speech while a person is speaking. Conversely, the speech comes to be sacrificed into the breath, when the person is silent. In short, this proposition emphasises the participation of breath in the speech activity.

## II

The breath<sup>5</sup> that is pushed upwards by the abdominal pressure, produces low tones 'mandra' while it moves in the chest; it produces middle tones 'madhyama' when it reaches the throat, while the high tones 'tara' are produced when it reaches the head. Perhaps this has a reference to the three registers of the human voice, called the *sthana*-s of speech. In each of these, there are the seven notes which are called 'yama', the controllers of speech. These allusions are slightly obscure. There can be no doubt that the three octaves are referred to. However, the words chest, 'uras', throat, 'kantha' and head, 'murdhan' present a problem; especially, the phrase "breath moving in the chest, producing sound without passing through the vocal cords, is a physical impossibility. Hence, it is necessary to take the word chest in a modified sense. It may be suggested that this word refers to the region between the vocal cords and the root of the tongue, technically known as the laryngo-pharynx. This cavity provides resonance for tones below the middle octave. Accordingly, throat should

be equated to the oro-pharyngeal region, providing resonance for tones below the middle octave. The region above this is the head, also known as the naso-pharynx. The nasal cavities act as the resonating chambers for tones above the middle octave. In addition to these three octaves, the authors of *Pratishakhyā*-s<sup>6</sup> also display their pedantry in discussing tones below the *mandra*, which finally shade off into tonelessness. Thus we have mumbling, whisper, murmur and the inaudible.

## III

The aphoristic style of our ancient works on Phonetics and Grammar renders the meaning of certain words obscure. One such is the word *Murdhan*. Ordinarily it means the head, but is also used in the sense of the hard palate. *Murdhan*, when used in the context of pitch, means the resonating chambers above the level of throat and mouth; when used in the context of the alphabet, it means the hard palate and is described as the dead end, which obstructs the breath, directing it back towards the mouth. While passing through the mouth, it is capable of producing the various letters of the alphabet, by striking against the various spots in the mouth. Detailed accounts are given of the way in which the different letters of the alphabet are to be produced. Here, the opinion of the various authors is divided.

However, in an attempt at generalisation, we come across certain basic principles: i) For the distinct pronunciation of any syllable, whether a vowel or a consonant, two types of efforts<sup>7</sup> are necessary the inner, 'abhyantara' and the outer 'bahya'. The inner one is meant for phonation and the outer for distinctness, 'vikasa' of the syllable. ii) The inner effort is fourfold. There seems to be an unmistakable distinction between the inner effort of the vowels and the consonants. The aspirates, S, S, s, and h and the vowels, a, a, etc., are to be pronounced with expanded pharyngeal cavity<sup>8</sup>. The consonants are to be pronounced with the tongue touching the various parts of the mouth, like the palate, teeth, lips etc. In other words, the vowels are to be formed in the throat, while the consonants are to be formed with the help of mouthlips etc., which interrupt and shape the breath issuing

out of the cavity of the throat. This, in short, is the advice of a modern vocal instructor, who says that the vowels should be formed closer to the point of origin i.e., the pharynx.<sup>9</sup>

The way in which the articulate sound arises is also discussed by the old masters.<sup>10</sup> This topic receives a brief treatment and the terms used therein need a detailed analysis. The following are the factors, which are said to be involved in sound-production.

i) Emission, 'anupradana' is the emitted breath. (For details vide sec. I above). This is subdivided into two categories viz. 'svaswa', aspiration and 'nada' sound. The aspirates have got poor potentials for the ringing tone as compared with the 'sounded' syllables which are characterised by a 'ring' in the voice.<sup>12</sup>

ii) Closure or touch 'samsarga' of the articulating organs. This refers to the contact of the tongue with the different parts of the mouth, that is necessary for the production of the consonants

iii) Position 'sthana' of the jaw, tongue etc

iv) Adjustment of the producing organ, 'karana-vinyā'. This adjustment is necessary for the production of vowels, which depend upon the widening and contraction of the guttural cavity

v) Measure, 'panmana' of the time required for pronunciation, i.e., the 'matra' or the quantity of a syllable.

This, in short, is the description of the correct sound-production. Auxiliary to it, is the study of the defects of speech. It is needless to add that these defects refer not only to music, but to Vedic recitation and ordinary speech as well. What follows is an attempt at relating to the so-called faults of sound-production<sup>13</sup> with the five factors listed above.

i) A very low voice, 'alpakantha', caused by the inadequate pressure of the air passing through the vocal cords.

Extreme loudness 'udghusta' which amounts to yelling and is devoid of melodiousness.

Head tones, 'sirasī gata' i.e. a very high pitch produced by the breath resonating in the naso-pharynx (vide sec. II above)

Tremor, 'gadgadita', an unintentional and unmusical tremor in the voice caused by incorrect breath support, leading to a shaky larynx, a quivering tongue and a jumpy jaw

ii) Stammering, 'nispidita' arising out of an uncontrolled pressure of tongue upon the articulating organs

Indistinct sounds, 'avyakta' which arise when the tongue does not touch the required part of the mouth

Undue nasalisation, *anumasikam*, i.e., the nasalization which is not called for

Using one part of the mouth, 'sthana' for producing consonants which belong to another part. This is known as 'nirasa'

iii) Extending or lowering the jaw, 'dasta' or 'sandasta', that causes tension in the muscles and cartilages of the sound-box, which then does not function normally

Excessive movements of the jaw, 'viklista' leading to the interference of the swallowing muscles with the action of the larynx

Pressing the lips against each other 'ambukṛta'. This interrupts the vocal flow

Rounding of the lips in a forward position 'suna'

iv) Stiffening of the root of the tongue, 'jihvamulanigraha' also known as the 'grasa' that obstructs the free movements of the tongue. 'Since tongue is the only movable part of the pharynx, its stiffness has a disastrous effect on the vowel formation

Extension of the producing organ, 'vyasa' This is the abnormal expansion of the pharyngeal cavity which produce unnatural tones

v) Having more or less 'matra-s' than necessary. This may not be counted as a defect in music. But serious notice is taken of it in the sacred recitation; hence, the 'gili' or the 'pragitam' i.e. the singing manner is condemned as a fault of recitation

Such are the observations of the ancient Indian scholars on human voice. The knowledge of human anatomy and physiology being in an undeveloped stage, their statements lack scientific precision. Even then it is not possible to brush them aside as inerudite. They stand in need of being examined in the light of the modern discoveries. The above is a humble attempt at doing so. It is certainly creditable that these problems received considerable attention centuries before the advent of the scientific age

Courtesy - "Music Bulletin"

<sup>4</sup> Varaspati on the *Bhava* of Yoga-sutra 1.36. <sup>5</sup> Vedangasikṣa 7.8. <sup>6</sup> Taittiriya Pratisakhya XXIII. 4-10. <sup>7</sup> Rgveda Pratisakhya 13.1

8. Siddhantakaumudi I.10. <sup>9</sup> Klein. Singing technique p 39. <sup>10</sup> Taittiriya Pratisakhya XXIII.2. <sup>11</sup> Taittiriya Pratisakhya tr. Whitney; XXIII.2. <sup>12</sup> Siddhantakaumudi 1.12. <sup>13</sup> Vedangasikṣa 34, 35, Rgveda Pratisakhya Ch. 13





**SRI SHANMUKHANANDA FINE ARTS & SANGEETHA SABHA (REGD.)**  
 292, Comrade Harbanslal Marg, Sion East, Mumbai - 400 022.  
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*Shanmukhananda Offers best Wishes to its Members  
 A Happy and Prosperous New Year and Happy Pongal*

Kuchipudi Kala Kendra - Mumbai and  
 Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangeetha Sabha jointly present  
**KUCHIPUDI MAHOTSAV - 1999**  
 on Sunday the 24th January 1999 at 7 00 p.m.  
 at Shanmukhananda Hall, King's Circle, Mumbai - 400 022.

#### PROGRAMME

1. Kuchipudi Dance "Alaya Nrityam"  
 By Smt. Rangamani & Disciples, Hyderabad
2. Kuchipudi Solo Recital  
 By Dr. Jonnalagadda Anuradha -  
 Reader, Dept. of Dance,  
 University of Hyderabad  
 Birla's Sangeetha Kalakendra Awardee  
 By Guru Padmabhushan Dr. Vempati  
 Chinna Satyam and his Disciples.
3. Dance Drama  
 "Ksheera Sagara Madhanam"

AN EVENING WITH HIS HOLINESS SRIMAD ANDAVAN SWAMY  
**SR! RANGA RAMANUJA MAHADESIKAN**  
 The Acharya of Srirangam Periaswaram 20-1-1999 - 3.30 p.m.

#### Programme

Reverential Suswagatham with Poornakumbham  
 Welcome Address by the President of the Sabha Dr. V Subramanian  
 Dolai Utsav to Lord Venugopalan with Musical Homage  
 by the Students of Shanmukhananda Sangeetha Vidyalaya  
 and  
 Anugraha Bhashanam by HIS HOLINESS  
 All are welcome to be the Recipients of the Acharya's Blessings.

#### FEBRUARY & MARCH PROGRAMMES FOR MEMBERS & INVITEES ONLY

February 14	Shri Maharajapuram S. Ramachandran	-	Vocal
Sunday	Shri M.A. Sundareswaran	-	Violin
6 00 p.m	Shri Vellore Ramabhadran	-	Mridangam
	Shri V. Nagarajan	-	Kanjira

March 20	Smt. Sudha Raghunathan & Party	-	Vocal
Saturday 6.00 p.m			

Sabha's WEBSITE will be inaugurated just before the  
 commencement of Kuchipudi Dance Fete on January 24, 1999

**S.Seshadri  
 V. Rangaraj**  
 Hon. Secretaries

## An Evening with Annamacharya Rachanas

**November 10, 1998.** Bhakta Rasika  
 Ranjani Sabha, Anushaktinagar, presented a  
 lecture-cum-demonstration by Sangeetha  
 Kalanidhi Nedunuri Krishnamoorthy on  
 Annamacharya Rachanas. He was accompanied  
 on the violin by S. P. Ramachandran and on the  
 mridangam by S. Sankaranarayanan. The pro-  
 gramme was compered by Jyoti Mohan.

To delve briefly into the life history of  
 Annamacharya : he was born in the year 1408,  
 in the month of Vaigasi under Visaka Nakshatra.  
 He had a vision of Lord Venkatesa and started  
 composing songs in praise of Him from the  
 tender age of 16. He breathed his last in 1503.  
 During his life span of about 87 years, he is said  
 to have composed nearly 32,500 Rachanas. Of  
 those, around 14,000 songs were found on  
 copper plates just opposite Sri Vari's Hundi by  
 the Triumalai Tirupati Devasthanam (TTD)  
 authorities. Later on, TTD published almost all  
 of these songs and made them available to the  
 public.

Annamacharya's Rachanas are classified  
 into 3 groups, namely :-

1. '**Sringara Manjari**' - depicting Madhura  
 Bhakti or a maiden's love for the Lord  
 and the symbolic merger of 'Jivatma'  
 with 'Paramatma'.
2. '**Sringara Sankeertana**' - an anthology  
 of Nayaka - Nayaki poems symbolising  
 the Lord and poet in Sringara.
3. '**Adhyatma Sankeertana**' - philosophical  
 and devotional work projecting the  
 sentiment of adoration for the Lord. Only  
 these Rachanas are written in Sanskrit  
 while the rest are all in chaste Telugu.

**Composition** :- Nedunuri explained that  
 the notable features of these Rachanas are the

poetic excellence and lyrical beauty which scored  
 over the musical part. In fact, the Acharya has  
 concentrated more on the Bhava to express his  
 adoration for the Lord. Thus, according to  
 Rallapalli Anantha Krishna Sarma, for the range  
 of nearly 14,000 Rachanas, only 89-90 different  
 Ragas have been used by Annamayya. Surpris-  
 ingly, Raga Kalyani does not feature at all !

Further, these Rachanas are suitable for  
 all styles of music like Folk music, Lullabies,  
 Marriage occasions (Nalangu Pattu), light clas-  
 sical and Western styles of music, etc. The com-  
 positions are a combination of poetic excellence  
 full of devotion and depth of Sangeetha Bhava.  
 Besides, the ingredients of Sringara Sastra and  
 the inputs of Vedanta are imbedded in them. The  
 artiste explained that all these Rachanas reveal  
 human experiences and emotions of a common  
 man to and around the modern civilized man,  
 spanning the period from the beginning of life till  
 the attainment of divine bliss.

**The Language** - The language used is  
 chaste Telugu. Even poets and scholars find it  
 difficult to arrive at the exact meaning of some  
 of these words as they are rare and not regularly  
 used. After all, these Rachanas are more than  
 500 years old.

Yet credit goes to Nedunuri for introducing  
 Annamacharya's Rachanas to the multitude of  
 Rasikas. He has tuned 108 compositions till now  
 of which 60 have been published and 48 are yet  
 to be. Quite a few like *Bhavamulona*, *Nanati*  
*Prathuku*, *Palukuthe Nelathalli* etc., have become  
 very popular.

In fact, when asked how he decided on a  
 particular Raga for a composition, Nedunuri replied  
 that it was totally based on 'intuition'. He tuned each  
 composition under the command of Lord  
 Venkatesa, whom he proudly called his 'friend'. At  
 the same time, he strictly adhered to his own prin-  
 ciple that each Raga will have its classical stamp

with no compromising on its purity. To prove his point, he demonstrated and showed how he has used the same Raga - Khamas - in all its purity but in different styles in 6 different Rachanas, according to the Bhava and mood of each song.

The artiste started off his recital with the piece '**Sakala Shantikaramu**' in Bahudari Raga.

"Oh Lord, devotion to you provides me with peace and comfort. All my sins will be washed away when I am granted the vision of your presence."

The famous '**Bhavamulona Bhagyamunandunu**' in Suddha Dhanyasi followed in all its grandeur.

Introvert or extrovert - What art thou oh Mind? Meditate on Him saying 'Govinda - Govinda'. All Gods are incarnations of Hari - all creations are within Hari - all names of Hari are mantras - Oh Mind Chant - 'Hari, hari, hari!' Vedas extol Vishnu - soul of the Universe; Oh Mind - call 'Vishnu - Vishnu' and search for him; He is Achuta - everlasting; He is the beginning and He is the End.

"Behold Achuta or Sri Venkatadri; Oh Mind - Surrender to Achuta!"

"**Ade Chudare Mohana Roopam**' was sung in Mohana. This piece describes the charming form of Lord Venkatapati which enhanced the women of Tripura. Annamayya says that the supreme form of the Lord with invaluable sapphire adorning him, has no equal on earth!"

"**Palukuthenelathalli**' in Karnataka Devagandhari was sung gracefully. This is very popular Sringeri Sankeertana performed by dancers. This song describes Goddess Alamelu Mangal in all her glory.

"Here's asleep the mellifluous - tongued mother, exhausted in amorous

sport with the Lord - a Lord adept in such a sport. In a delightful graceful posture, on the pearl mattress, looking pretty, the beloved of the Lord is asleep, although the day has dawned'.

'**Palumaru Utla Panduganu**' set in Raga Mukhari sounded joyful unlike the usual mood of this Raga. This song describes a festival called - 'Utla Panduga' - depicting little Krishna reaching out for the pot of curds. The interesting point to note here is that Annamacharya had composed this song in Andhra, around 500 years ago. But this festival is celebrated in Maharashtra even today, in the name of 'Govinda' during Krishnashtami. Nedunuri employed the Raga Mukhari in a totally different mood to bring out the essence of gaiety and charm of the lyrics. It was tuned as folk music, most appropriate to the Sahitya Bhava.

'**Ramachandradithadu Raghuv eerudu**' sung in lilting Dwijavanti set to Adi Tala in Tisra Gathi had the listeners swaying to rhythm.

"He is Ramachandra, the hero of Raghuvamsa. He is able to fulfil the desires of so many - Kamadhenu for Ahalya, the Kalpavriksha of Kaushika, Chintamani to Sitadevi, Parijatha for King Janaka; He is the secret of philosophy to Sabari's devotion. He is the Supreme God worshipped by Guha. He is the form standing in front of believers as Lord of Venkatadri."

The maestro has also tuned the following few songs.

'**Antarangamella Sri Harki Oppinchakunte**' in Raga Huseni.

"Annamayya states that if our heart is not entrusted to Sri Hari, our existence is in vain. No use in becoming a man sans wisdom; no use in attaining wealth without doing charity; no use in having a mind that does not think of Madhava; no use knowing to speak if one cannot speak in

a pleasing manner; no use trying to be pure without devotion. What is the use of seeing thousands if one has not seen Lord Venkatesa!

'**Paluvicharamulela Paramatma**' in Shanmukhapriya claims.

"Why should there be any question when You are there to take care? No elaborate rituals are necessary. It is enough to take refuge at Your feet!"

The famous '**Nanati Prathuki**' in Revathi so runs -

"Life is but a dream. Kaivalya - revelation invisible. In between birth and death, all life is a mere drama. Lord Venkateswara is above all and there begins the sky which is the Kaivalya".

'**Brahma Kadigina Padamu**' in Mukhari is thus explained

"This is the foot washed by Brahma. This foot by itself is Brahman. This is the foot kept on the head of Bali, the one that struck the sky; the foot that served Indra, the foot on the head of the serpent. This is the foot that granted salvation in different ways to different yogis. This is the foot that showed Sri Venkatagiri as the Eternal abode - the Parama Pada".

'**Muddugare Yashoda**' in Kurinji is a favourite dance piece. It gives a glorious description of little Krishna. He is referred to as a pearl, so charming yet with super human powers that cannot be battered. He is the ruby held by the gopis, the diamond aimed at opposing Khamasa, the green emerald illuminating the three worlds. But above all, He is the tiny adorable Krishna.

It was indeed a memorable evening for the ardent music lovers who could savour the beauty of Annamacharya Rachanas in their different hues.

Lalitha Bharadwaj

## APPEAL

Four Volumes in the "GARLAND" series titled **A Garland, Another Garland, Yet Another Garland & The Fragrant Garland** are before the music-loving public. Readers of SHANMUKHA would have perused the gracious reviews of the books by the Editor. It is my desire to wind up the 'GARLAND' series of Biographical Dictionary of Carnatic Composers, Musicians with the fifth and the last of the series. I shall be grateful if Vidvans and Vidushis of standing and musicologists help with full-bio-data, special comments, anecdotes and achievements and join the non-commercial Yagna. Those whose lives had been included already may peruse the contents in the four books & suggest additions worthy of being passed on to music - loving public & posterity.

'GARLAND' Rajagopalan

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## The Forgotten Art Of Jalatarangam

By Anayampatti S. Ganesan

A variety of musical instruments have been in vogue in South India. When many either having a Western origin like Clarinet, Saxophone, Mandolin or of doubtful origin like the Violin, still pervade the music field, it is quite unfortunate some ancient instruments of the native origin, such as Jalatarangam, Kidikitti and so on are near-forgotten. Being the Jalatarangam artiste myself, with the heirloom as my family heritage, it is a privilege for me to write about this hoary and worthy musical instrument.

'Jalatarangam' literally means 'Water Waves' and be better translated as 'Water bowl chymes'. In the past, it had many names: 'Udaka Vadya', 'Udaka Kumbha Vadya' or simply 'Kumbha Vadya'. 'Udaka' means 'Water' and 'Kumbha' is a 'Pot', now a 'bowl'. This is the only bell type of instrument in concert music, though it had an occasional participation in the cine orchestra of yesteryears.

Jalatarangam has an ancient origin. It has been mentioned in works such as '*Uma Maheswara Bharatam*' (where it is said to be one among the eighteen auspicious instruments), '*Sangeeta Parijata*' of Ahobala, '*Sangeetha Sara*' and 'Vatsyana's '*Kama Sutra*'. Vatsyana accredits it as one of the sixtyfour arts. Hindu scriptures also speak about the instrument's greatness. For instance, '*Srauta Sutra*' specifies that the music of Veena and Jalatarangam should envelope a Yagasala, where sacrificial rites are performed.

Jalatarangam was in use even outside India like Java, Sumatra, Bali and the Middle East. It is one of the instruments used in the Indonesian Gammelan orchestras. Brahmananda Temple in Jog Jakarta, built in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, A.D., has a sculpture depicting the playing of Jalatarangam. We are enlightened by historians that Alexander, the Great, while returning to Greece, after his victorious visit to India, took with him some Indian musicians, among whom were some Jalatarangam players

Jalatarangam was greatly patronised by kings and nobles, though it gradually fell into disuse, by the passage of time, especially as a solo concert instrument, due to multifarious reasons. The difficulty in producing Gamakas, the soul of Karanatak music is one reason attributed. It is generally held that Gamakas cannot be produced on this instrument but, perhaps, it would be more correct to say that it is very difficult rather than impossible to do so. Experts have proved it to be possible by adopting various techniques. We understand only bronze cups were used in olden times. By about the 10<sup>th</sup> century A.D., porcelain cups of sonorous character began to be made and replaced the bronze ones.

The instrument consists of 18 cups of different sizes, each with a different tone. The cups are arranged in front of the performer, in a semi-circle, the pitch of the cup increasing from left to right. The bigger cups give a deep and low sound and the smaller ones produce higher pitched notes. When struck with a small stick, the bowls, filled with water, produce melodious sounds and thereby the notes of Karnatak Music. The sticks are made of thin bamboo splinters or nutmeg wood.

Water is poured into the cups and its level is frequently adjusted to serve four purposes:

- 1) to increase or decrease the pitch easily; If water is lesser, the pitch increases and vice versa; 2) to help produce sustained notes; 3) to enable Gamakas to be produced; and 4) to give stability to the cup, without getting toppled, at the time of the play. Formerly, a small wooden spear fitted with a handle was held in the left hand and after striking the respective cup with the stick in the right hand, the spear was plunged into and lifted from the water in the cup, for producing 'Gamakas'. This process had to be repeated, depending upon the necessity of the duration of the Gamaka required. Nowadays, by bringing into contact the playing stick with the

water meniscus, in a suitable way, Gamakas are produced.

In North India, Jalatarangam, in solo, is played only in fast tempos, akin to the 'Gat' on the Sitar. All musical compositions of medium and fast tempos can be played effectively on this. There were some who could play compositions, in a very slow tempo and 'Pallavis' in four Kalais.

We are almost in the dark about the names of the ancient Jalatarangam players. Those of this century alone are available to us. Ustad Alla Bux of Baroda (who was in Mysore), Kunrakkudi Krishnayyar, Mysore Veenai Seshanna, Kalayarkovil Subbayyar, Thanjavur Rama Rao, Ammachatram Kannuswamy Pillai, Tiruvaiyaru Sadhu Ganapati, Worur Ramaswamy Pillai, Avudayarkovil Harihara Bhagavata, Azhwar Tirunagiri Appadurai Iyengar, Ramanathapuram Subramania Pillai, Keezhachivalpatti Venkatramana Rao, Mysore Devendrappa, Perur Goplakrishna Dikshitar and Madras Ramanayya Chetty were a few among the galaxy. But none pursued this art as a career.

The only person, who dedicated his entire life to learning, mastering and propagating this ancient art of Jalatarangam and endeavoured to elevate its status was Anayampatti Subbayyar. His remarkable success with this instrument turned him to be a legend. The words 'Jalatarangam' and 'Anayampatti Subbayyar' became synonymous. If this art exists today, it is only because of Subbayyar's untiring efforts. He was born in 1881 and at the age of six, became the disciple of Kunrakkudi Krishnayyar, a Samasthana Vidwan of Ramanathapuram, mastered vocal music and Jalatarangam. Soon he became a renowned artiste and through Harikesanallur Muthiah Bhagavata he was made the Asthana Vidwan of Mysore in 1925. It may be difficult to believe but true that Subbayyar used to play Pallavi in eight Kalais on this instrument. It was he who first used sticks of various thickness to produce the required sound effects and he was 'at home' in producing Gamakas. He trained his eldest son, Kuppaswami in this art.

The father and son used to give a number of duets with 'double set' Jalatarangams. Subbayyar passed away on November 9, 1961. Kuppaswami became a brilliant player, though he did not live long. Dandapani, younger brother of Kuppaswami, though a violinist by profession, became very prominent as a Jalatarangam artiste. He died on 1984 at the age of 57.

Avudayarkovil Harihara Bhagavata, a reputed Gettuvadya and Harikatha exponent learnt Jalatarangam from Anayampatti Subbayyar. Thiruvannur Rajayi was a three-dimensional personality - a vocalist, a danseuse and a competent Jalatarangam player, tutored by Subbayyar. Krishnarayapuram Dhanam was another disciple of Subbayyar.

Ramanathapuram Subramania Pillai is said to be an expert in this art and lived about seven decades ago. Azhwarthirunagiri Appadurai Iyengar was Pillai's disciple. Madras Ramanayya Chetty learnt from Appadurai Iyengar. Madurai Babu Iyengar is one more artiste.

There are some Jalatarangam players in the North such as K. L. Sood, Yasim Khan and Kurban Khan. Their South Indian counterparts are few too, like, myself, Seeta Duraiswamy and Uttarakosamangai Kamakoti Boi.

Why is the art of Jalatarangam, deemed to be a sacred one by the Hindu Sastras, is on the verge of decline? First and foremost reason, want of proper and adequate patronage. No student of music comes forward to learn, due to many reasons. Concert opportunities are scarce. Selecting cups in different sizes, tone and pitch is very difficult, due to non-availability. One has to go many places and patiently select the required cups. Transportation of these fragile "instruments" to place of concert is another difficulty. Above all these, much patience and a highly sensitive ear are essential to tune the cups in perfect alignment with the Tambura Sruti. After overcoming all these, where to look for opportunities?

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*Wishes its Members A Happy and Prosperous Tamil New Year*  
*Managing Committee & Board of Trustees*

## APRIL PROGRAMME

10th April 1999 - Saturday - 6.00 p.m.

Shri T. N. Seshagopalan - Vocal  
 Shri K. V. Prasad - Mridangam

Shri M. Chandrasekaran - Violin  
 Shri V. Suresh - Ghatam

This Programme is dedicated to the Great Maestro of yesteryears Sangeetha Kalanidhi Shri Musiri Subramania Iyer to mark his Birth Centenary Celebrations. On the occasion, Justice Shri B. N. Srikrishna of the Bombay Judiciary has kindly consented to unveil the portrait of the doyen presented by his proud disciple Shri C. V. Narasimhan, I.C.S. Retd., and Former Under Secretary General, United Nations, to the Shanmukhananda Portrait gallery.

### Daily Guest Tickets

Ground Floor "F" to "O", Rows Rs.100/- "P" to "EE" Rows Rs.50/-,  
 1st Balcony Rs.30/- II Balcony Rs.20/-

Kindly produce your membership cards/Daily Guest Tickets at the Entrance

### FORTH COMING PROGRAMMES

16TH MAY, 1999 - SUNDAY - 6.30 P.M. Shri T. V. Sankaranarayanan & Party - Vocal Recital

13TH JUNE, 1999 - SUNDAY - 8.00 P.M. Smt. Jayashree Rajagopalan & Party  
 Nrithyodaya (Padma Subramaniam Paramparyam)  
 in a Dance Drama on "ABHIJNANA SHAKUNTALAM"

10TH JULY, 1999 - SATURDAY - 6.00 P.M. Hyderabad Brothers & Party - Vocal Recital

8TH AUGUST, 1999 - SUNDAY - 6.00 P.M. Violin B. Ranjani & B. Gayatri - Vocal Recital

### SANGEETHANJALI TO VAGGEYAKARAS

Pandit Vishnu Digambar Paluskar & Pandit Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande  
 28th March, 1999 Sunday - 6.00 p.m.

at Jasubhai Convention Hall, Shanmukhananda Tower (6th Floor)  
 Hindustani Vocal Music Recital by Dr. Vandana Katti & Party  
 (Vandana Katti is a disciple of Smt. Manik Bhide [Jaipur - Atrauli Style]  
 of Smt. Kishori Amonkar's Music Parampara.)

S. Seshadri  
 V. Rangaraj  
 Hon. Secretaries

### FREE MEDICAL CHECKUP AND FAMILY PLANNING CAMP

Members would be glad to note that the Jusubhai R. K. Shah Medical Centre of the Sabha in joint collaboration with Ruchika Club of Mumbai is organising a Free Medical Check-up And Family Planning Camp between 9.00 a.m. & 3.00 p.m. on Sunday, April 4, 1999.

The Camp will have General Physicians as well as Consultants to advise patients in areas like eye-care, dental, skin, gynaecology etc

Smt. Ackamma Alexander has graciously agreed to be the Chief Guest and formally inaugurate the camp at 10.00 a.m. at the Jasubhai Convention Hall, 6th Floor in Sabha's Tower Complex.

All members are invited to attend the inaugural function as well as benefit from the Camp.

## PURANDRA PRABHAVAM

It was a concert with a difference, Formed part of the Vaggeyakara Days - celebrations regularly organised by the Shanmukhananda Sangeetha Sabha - it yet stood out as a novel venture. His Devarnamas, Ugabhogas Divyanama Sankeerthanas and other forms making for a concert repertoire.

Purandara Dasa is a unique example of a multi-millionaire turned overnight into a saint and later a composer. His knowledge of languages, Shastras and music came to fore making him one of the greatest Sangeetakaras and Sangeetakarhas of his age (15<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup> centuries). Even as a child he was influenced by Annamacharya's Keerthanas, perhaps the form. Once he became a Vairagya and a devotee, songs poured forth. The first song he composed was *Mosahodenallo* in Atana. In the Charana he weeps - "have I not wasted all these thirty years of my life without having faith in the Holy Feet of Hari and become a cheat in indulging in worldly things?"

'Purandara Dasa', christened so by the great Guru Vyasaraya to whom he surrendered after renouncing his worldly wealth, became one of the great Haridasas and carried his mission of spreading Bhakti through music going on an extensive pilgrimage. He is said to have travelled extensively between Himalayas and Kanya Kumari three times, visiting and singing at all the shrines. Whatever the authenticity the fact that he had composed 4,75,000 songs makes his output a stupendous achievement. That he had himself mentioned this in his song *Vasudevana Namavaliya* in Mukhari is evidence enough of his creative output though only few thousands are available.

Purandara Dasa did not confine himself to propagation of Bhakti alone. He revolutionised the musical stream by giving a new direction to Sangeetha Lakshana, Sangeetha Siksha and Sangeetha prasthara. Every facet of development in Karnatak Music during the past 3 centuries, such as Raga, Tala, Krti, Bhava and the blend of Sangeeta and Sahitya with great philosophic import and truths and spiritual emancipation could be traced to the foundation laid by Purandara Dasa.

His systematisation of Tala - the evolution of Sapta Talas, the graded lessons of Swaravali he composed for a systematic learning of music, the selection of the auspicious Mayamalavagowla for the beginner's lessons and its significance eventually paving the way for Venkatamakhi's 72 Melakarta Scheme. his Divyanama Sankeertanas, Utsava Sampradaya keerthanas and other compositions such as Suladis and Ugabhogas - all had a lasting impact. No doubt, he is rightly hailed as Karnatak Sangeetha Pitamaha and a link between the medieval Bhajana tradition and the modern classical Sampradaya

The Devamamas and other forms of compositions he composed are gems with great potential for classical presentation. Maybe, they are called simple Keertanas or Devarnamas, some with Pallavi-Anupallavi-Charana structure and some with just Pallavi-Charana form, yet some suited to sing in Sloka format and a few in Raga-Tala malika but all have scope for improvisation such as Niraaval - Swaraprastharas and lend themselves melodically and Sahitya-wise to these facets

In the presentation of Purandara Prabhavam in January 1999 Mangalam Krishnamoorthy, a disciple of Smt. Neela Ramgopal of Bangalore, with a vast repertoire of Purandara Dasa attempted to concertise a select variety of the Saint's gems and made the Sangeethanjali an educative experience.



One found how much of improvisational potential his simple Geetham in Malahari had when Mangalam commenced the concert with *Lambodara Lakumikara* ..... and proceeded on to *Sri Gananatha* in all its Gamaka graces. It is in the imagination of the artiste to enhance and elevate the classical potential and quality of a composition. Mangalam has melodious voice, fluency and eloquence plus a fine aesthetic perception. Though now and then she felt the voice fatigue, she managed to make a pleasant concert of the 'Prabhavam'.

Following the Geetham was a composition on Ganesha in Bilahari - *Sharanu Benagane Kanaka Roopane*. The Alapana and Swaras with which this piece was adorned fitted in the concert milieu.

A chic Sahana for Saraswati Vandana was evocative and the Ugabhoga, a form of poem usually sung as Sloka, provided the taste of the composer's poetic genius and the number culminated in the popular one in the concert circuit *Narayana* (Suddha Dhanyasi). The Ragamalika Sloka in Valaji, Hamsanandi had violinist Mangala Vaidyanathan excel in Alapana strips doing a neat Viloma phase. She gave a melodious support throughout.

One of the numbers fully decked with concert aesthetics of Alapana - Niraval and Kalpana Swaras was *Kelano Hari Talano* (Kalyani). Though presented in solo format, the composition reflected the grandeur of congregational singing as made out in the Niraval interpretation.

Selection of Utsava Sampradaya Keerthanas, lullaby all made the concert complete. And there was a Ragam - Tanam - Pallavi in Todi as a homage. Accompanists enjoyed participating. The percussion pair Ganesan (Mridangam) and M. R. Ganesh (Morsing) provided soft and inspiring rhythm quite in tune with the Anjali spirit.

- KINNARI

Following are excerpts from Mangalam Krishnamoorthy's compering material on "Purandra Prabhavam"

## PURANDARA PRABHAVAM

*Purandhara Dasa Charanabhyam namo namaha*

The desire for name, fame wealth and other worldly things deludes a man. To give up this desire and move unattached, one must love and treat all things alike casting all distinctions and differences aside and for this, divine blessing is necessary. Even after getting this blessing, the devotee is subjected to more trials and tribulations by God to prove his greatness. One such devotee was Purandaradasa.

Purandaradasa is said to have been born in the year 1484 A.D., in a place called Purandharaghatta in Bellary District of Karnataka State. He was a trader in gold and a money lender by profession and was known for his miserliness. Renouncing his riches and worldly pleasures, Purandaradasa proceeded to Hampi and there he became the chief disciple of the great Vyasa Raya who is said to have christened him "Purandara Vittala" which became his Mudra or signature. He is stated to have composed 4,75,000 songs. Manuscripts for about 8,000 songs are available. His songs are both in Kannada and Sanskrit. They are more popularly known as Devara Namas or Dasar Padas.

We find in his songs an excellent combination of music, rhythm and alliteration and he is considered the greatest of the lyric poets of Karnataka. Tyagaraja praises Purandaradasa in his opera *Prahlada Bhakti Vijayam*. Purandaradasa is believed to have systematised the initial lessons of Karnatic Music, namely, Sarali Varisai, Jantai Varisai, Hechusthayi Varisai, Thakkusthayi Varisai, Thattu Varisai, Alankarams and Geethams and also established Mayamalavagowla as the suitable Raga to be used for these music primer lessons. This great

composer who was an ardent devotee of Lord Pandarinatha attained eternal bliss in the year 1564 A.D. at the age of 80.

In the Cutchery tradition, the compositions of Purandaradasa, whenever sung, are wittingly or unwittingly relegated to the Thukkada segment. Not many prefer to dwell into the Anandasagara of his music which touches the hearts of the singer and the listener alike.

Herewith full-length concert wholly with the compositions of Purandaradasa which will be a humble Nandanjali to the great saint

It is always a convention to begin a concert with Ganeshanjali. And in Sangeetha Pithamaha's creations we find a number of forms invoking the elephant God. Here we start with the popular Geetham in Malahari *Sri Gananatha* an invocation to Sindoor-hued Vinayaka, followed by a salutation *Sharanu Benagane* to the Lord who is described as *Kanaka Roopana*, one who rides the Mooshika, sporting a serpent and a remover of all obstacles leaving no trace and as a friend of those who surrender at his feet. (*Sharanu Benagane* - Bilahari-Adi).

Saraswathi Vandanam is presented with a composition of Purandaradasa '*Pali Samma Mudhu Sharade*' in Sahana set to Adi Tala. The composer pleads to the Goddess of Learning, Saraswathi, Sharada as she is also known, that his tongue should never ever utter anything wrong. He prays to the presiding deity of Sringeri to protect him. "*Palisamma mudhu Sharadhe*".

Purandara Dasa had popularised a form of poetry called "Ugabhoga. Even though, Sri Padaraja and others at that time had written Devara Nama in Ugabhoga, it was in Purandara Dasa's period that it attained its pinnacle. Strangely enough, Purandara Dasa himself had never termed this poetry form as Ugabhoga. It was Vijaya Dasa who gave that term in one of his verses, in honour of his 'guru' Purandara Dasa. These Ugabhogas have simple form in the sense that the Chandhas governing the form are

not very strict. These forms are sung only with a Raga but without Tala i.e., they are sung basically in between lengthy classical songs to give some respite to the singer. Even though they have simple form, they convey a lot of meaning, which are basically written in simple words and phrases, like *gade* conveying a wealth of inner meaning.

*Kalau Sankeerthya Keshavam* - Hari Namasmaramam is the only and the easiest way to attain Moksha in this Kali yuga. This is beautifully brought out in the Ugabhoga - "*Ninna Naamava nenadhu, punidanadheno*"

The first stanza deals with the theme of Gajendra Moksha. When Gajendra, the elephant was caught by a crocodile in the muddy waters, he shouted Your name and You were right there to help him. The speed with which Vishnu reached to save the animal is poetically brought out in the line '*endhu bandhu mundhu nindhu kaidha Doraye*'.

The next stanza is on the story of Ajamela, a sinner although his life chanced to call out the name of his son "Narayana" unintentionally, and that singular utterance made him reach the abode of Vishnu, Vaikunta.

The last stanza deals with Draupathi Vastrabhaharanam. The Pandavas having lost everything in the dice game played Draupathi as their final stake and lost her too. When she was brought to the court, Duryodhana asked Dushashana to humiliate her. Having lost everything, and her husbands rendered helpless, she called out to Lord Krishna. Though he was at Dwaraka, in a fraction of a second he sensed the situation his devotee was in and the result was the endless supply of Vasra, to save her from ignominy.

This culminates in the "*Narayana Ninna namada Smaranaya*" in Suddhadhanyasi, Kanta Chapu Tala, where Purandaradasa beseeches the Lord that he should always utter his Sahasra Nama, be it at times of adversity or prosperity and in even mentally unstable state.

The composer now cites to the Lord several instances from the Bhagavatha Purana, when He visited and blessed his Bhakthas through the famous Ugabhoga "*Baliyanamanage Vamana Bandhanthe*". "Oh Lord you visited the Mahabali as Vamana, you visited Vidhura at his humble house as Krishna, Vibheeshana as Rama, Muchukunda as Mukunda, the hearts of the Gopis as Govinda, let your Nama be always on my tongue and protect me.

*Odi Barayya* (Khamas) fits in here well. Purandaradasa hastens to the Lord, "do come into my heart not slowly, but *Odi Baarayya*, come fast. When you come to me, I shall look at you, cuddle you, talk to you, sing songs in your praise. You love music, you are pure and you are the beloved of all beautiful women." Two more compositions reveal the composer's poetic excellence and lucidity. *Deva Banda Namma Swami Bandano* (Kapi) on the description of the Lord who at the request of the composer has given Darshan to him. And in *Ninna nodi dhanyanadheno* (Andholika) the composer says that he is a blessed soul with the Darshan of the Lord. He prays to the Lord that he be given the privilege to serve Him without any bias. The beauty of the composition is in Dwijakshara Prasam:

Pakshi Vahana Lakshmi Ramana  
Lakshyam Ninna Padadhali  
Daksha Daitya Siksha Pandu Paksha  
Raksha Kamalaksha.

Purandaradasa's songs lend themselves for elaboration in terms of Neraval and Kalpanaswaram, and *Kelano Hari Thalano* (Kalyani-Misrachapu) would demonstrate it. The saint-composer emphasises here on the Bhakti aspect of devotees. Lord Hari is not inclined to listen to music embellished with Thalam and Melam aspects but devoid of Bhava. He will not listen to grammar-rich music clothed with Swaraganam, Manodharma but devoid of Divyanamam. But the Lord listens to the music of his steadfast devotees who sing with tears of joy, taking the name of Hari, in between the verses.

*Sakala Graha Phala neene* in Atana praises the Lord as the planets in the Cosmic system. He is the day and night, He is the months and Pakshas that govern the waxing and waning of the moon and the months, He is the constellation of stars.

The Ragam Tanam Pallavi in Todi is a Samarpanam to the sage composer. *Dasa Paadha Dhanyavu*, (the Pallavi, specially composed for the occasion) in Todi set to Tisra Triputa with one Akshara eduppu, has been composed by Mangalam's versatile husband, Shri Krishnamurthy, who is a very familiar figure in the Mumbai Music circles.

Utsava Sampradaya Keerthanas have been made popular by Saint Tyagaraja. We find such type of songs composed by Purandaradasa too. The Reetigowai piece set to Adi, "*Thamboola Vakkolo*" describes how the lotus eyed Rukmini offers the Lord the betel leaves with arecanuts scented with the Sampangi oil, athar, sandal oil and other Mukha vasana dhruvayas. The soft bed scattered with jasmine is ready for the Lord's anandanidra. A parallel could be drawn with the "*Vidamu sayave*" of Tyagaraja.

A lullaby to the Lord ready for his Anandanidra, sung by his mother, Yashoda brims with maternal affection and love. Lullaby to the one who rests on the seven seas, to the one whose bed is the Adhishesha, to the one who loves Samaganam, to the one who is worshipped by Soma and Surya, to the one who at the time of Pralaya appeared as the Valatpathrasayi and to the one who is worshipped by Narada, Gandharvas and who is the son of Dasharatha. *Thoogidhale Rangana*, (Neelambari, Misrachapu).

The concert concludes with the Ugabhoga, *Indhina Dinave Subha Dinavu*, where Purandaradasa says, that moment, that day, that Yoga, that Karana, that week when the Lord's praise is sung the most auspicious. Follows Mangalam in Suruti - Tisra Gati.

## Cultural Scene in Mumbai

### Bouquet of Melody

November 1, 1998 was a great day in the annals of Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangeetha Sabha. The finely renovated Shanmukhananda Hall that was devoured by fire eight years ago, was recommissioned that morning with a solemn Grihapravesam. Amidst Homams - Ganapathi, Navagraha etc., and chants of Mantras, Sangeethanjali by the students of Shanmukhananda Sangeetha Vidyalaya and screening of *Arupadhalvedu*, a documentary of Films Division, the Hall, the Sabha, the Sangeetha Vidyalaya, the Medical Centre etc., were dedicated to the presiding deity Lord Shanmukha who is the symbol of youth and resurgence, the saviour of mankind, the embodiment of knowledge and wisdom and a model of utter renunciation.

The opening major cutchery, following the Grihapravesam was a Karnataka - Hindustani Jugalbandi by the brother-sister team Prof. T. N. Krishnan and Dr. N. Rajam in December highlighting the Sabha's objective of National Integration and Cultural Synthesis.

"Jugalbandi", remarked Ustad Bismillah Khan, the inimitable Shehnai maestro once, "is a flower bouquet. One artiste places a flower, the other another, so they go on and in the end emerges a beautiful bouquet". So reminiscing, Dr. N. Rajam, Violinist *par excellence* in Hindustani Shaili, pairing with her elder brother and Violin maestro of Karnataka idiom, Prof. T. N. Krishnan, bowed her opening strain of Hamsadhwani stroking the hearts of the audience and kindling their imagination of the emerging 'bouquet of melody'.

The inaugural concert of the Shanmukhananda Sabha at the renovated imposing Shanmukhananda Hall that December evening, was, no exaggeration, a memorable event. For there could be no better definition for Jugalbandi than that of the Ustad and no performance could have excelled this opening presentation aimed at national integration, effecting a cultural synthesis.

Yes. It was a multi-hued melodic bouquet the brother-sister duo presented, channeling their imagination, their musical acumen and vision, their aesthetic perception and artistic skills towards a wholesome musical form. There was a skilful adherence to their respective musical systems and a suave blend of the same.

Following Hamsadhwani was a Ragam-Tanam-Pallavi - Gat suite in Kanada - Bageshri Kanada combine. Though not identical the Hindustani Raga-combine was akin to Kamatak, Kanada and this was perceptible in Rajam's delineation. Absorbed in his sister's Gayaki style of rendition Krishnan tried to emulate the Meendish elongation in his play while Rajam exploited the fortissimic and pianissimic nuances in the glides from one note to other. She has a felicitous style of dovetailing into the other system while still playing in her ground. The Taan patterns, for instance, could well blend the systems. And the Pallavi - Gat suite well projected a compositional fusion.

The area of Swaraprastharas gave the duo an opportunity to revel in their respective techniques. As against Krishnan's Kalpanaswaras Rajam wove Taan patterns and for once her Drut was not a relative acceleration in speed but a true third Kala in Karnataka idiom (ie. doubling up of speed from Madhya Laya). And that gave percussionists T. K. Murthy s (Mridangam) and Mukesh Jadhav (Tabla) to play complex rhythm with ease. In the multi-hued Swara garland woven alternately Behag, Desh, Kapi, Dwijavanti, Shanmukhapriya, Darbari cascaded in the twin idiom, capped with Todi of the Karnataka form. Rajam had no hassles in adhering to it as it was homespun melody for her. (Rajam had her early training in the Southern system and she was quite a performer before switching on to Hindustani idiom). Their Sawai - Jawab- finale was quite impressive.

Khamas, the next in the programme, was projected from a different angle. Taking up *Jayati*

*Jayati Bharata Mata*, a patriotic composition, in Kamatak form and Gat in Hindustani the duo developed the twin compositions with admirable planning. Krishnan responded with Pallavi Anupallavi - Charanam to what Rajam played in Gat rendition. The blend was of melody and structure.

The concluding Bhairavi - Sindhu Bhairavi number was a melodious finale. The duo who have been presenting this for sometime now, have found their idioms in Jugalbandi blending where they could, diversifying where they should yet fingering - and bowing their way with a focus on melodic blend and structural symmetry.

The Jugalbandi was preceded by a short function of Prize distribution and Scholarship award - where a number of winners had the blessings of the maestros. The Jugalbandi was followed the next day by a well-tendered, planned and well-appreciated Kamatak Vocal by the young, star on a steady ascent, Sanjay Subramaniam.

The scheme of Ghana Raga sequence Nattai, Gowla, Arabhi, Varali, Sri of repertoire went well with the 'Ghathra' cutcheri and showed intelligent planning. There was a variety of Vaggeyakaras, Ragas and Talas in the presentation, authentic paataantara, slick pronunciation and sustaining aesthetics. The Sangeetha Pitamaha, Tyagaraja, Alwars, Maha Vaidyanatha Sivan and others made the repertoire rich. After an absorbing rendition of Purandara Dasa's *Jaya Jaya Jaya Janaki Ramana* following a fine-opening with Kalyani Ata Tala Varnam, and going through the rest of the Ghana Ragas, the choice of Maha Vaidyanatha Iyer's-magnificent edifice, *Pranatarthihara 72 Mela*. - Ragamalika was a pleasant surprise. Not many venture into this edifice, for it requires a very deep understanding and presentational acumen to bring out the different shades, nuances and identities of Ragas which run in a sequence with just a one-note difference in the scale. It is not everybody's cup of tea. Sanjay was not only fluent and melodious but also enjoyed the lyrics and the nuances. He presented the first two Chakras comprising twelve Ragas.

Prior to that he gave a very touching interpretation of Varali and *Eti Janma* of Tyagaraja the Alapana highlighting the poignance of the Kriti and the Niraval at *Satileni Maraikoti Lavanya* kept up the feel with aesthetics. The swaras in Usl kept the Violinist Nagai Muralidharan on tender hooks.

Bhairavi, elaborate and keeping up with the contemplative mood with which Sanjay started the Cutcheri, was an assurance that this hard working artiste who has come up his way steadily would certainly preserve the classicism, and not let applause and adulation corrupt his involvement. He almost got into what could be called 'musical ecstasy'. There were filigrees and frescoes, and sustaining pauses and substantive phrasings too. And his choice of *Upacharamulanu* (Adi) showed his urge to present not too common or much in vogue - a perspective in cutcheri scheme. The well phased Niraval at *Kapata Nataka Sootthradhari* and engaging Swaras were epitomised by a Thani dialogue by Sangeeta Kalanidhi T. K. Murthy (Mridangam) and Sri Ram Subbaraman (Khanjira) consisting of exhaustive Korvais - an objective lesson on rhythmic variations and patterns to those who had the mind to learn and not mind the time.

Musically a grand picture after, the Sahana R-T-P stood out for an elaborate scheme and well-developed suite with exquisite ease and finesse.

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It is some years since Sharada Sangeetha Vidyalaya, which has an impressive structure for imparting training in Music and dance and with a magnificent marble idol of Saraswati, the Goddess of learning and knowledge presiding over the portals, has been presenting once in a while Kamatak music recital; and this year a Bharathi Natyam - solo too was organised.

During November, a Veena solo by Smt. Mangalam Muthuswamy and a Bharathi Natyam by Rajendran were presented. The auditorium within the Vidyalaya premises in Kala Nagar, Banda, was cosy and peaceful for such chamber concerts and the presentations too of high quality.

Mangalam Muthuswamy, a disciple of Visalakshi of Venkataramana Das school and a faculty member of Shanmukhananda Sangeetha Vidyalaya, gave a pleasing Veena recital marked for the fine deflection, clarity of 'diction' - ie. Gayaki style - and fluency in play. (It may be pointed out that Venkataramana Das of Vijayanagara was a veteran playing the instrument in a vertical posture.

One of the Vainikas in forefront of the metropolis, she selected Ragas that could appeal to the mixed audience of Karnataka and Hindustani streams, and in the short time frame proved her mettle with fine textured music flowing in Madhyama Kala.

Sankaranarayanan, who has had his training in Shanmukhananda under Midanga Vidwan Shri Chandramouli has established himself as a Mridangist of tonal elegance and rhythmic ease. The melodic ring in his Laya play adds tonal colour to the performance. And that evening he played with elan remaining soft in his strokes, so as to highlight the Veena nuances. Supporting on Veena was Priya Viswanathan, a budding disciple of Mangalam.

The Bharathi Natyam recital by Rajendran, son and disciple of Guru Soundararajan and an M.F.A. student of Nalanda Dance Academy, had the vigour and grace balancing the two aspects essential of the classical dance.

A significant milestone in the annals of Sharada Sangeetha Vidyalaya was the celebration of Saint Tyagaraja's Aradhana. Strains of Pancharatnas permeated the hall for the first time. Led by Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar - Chandrasekhara Bhagavathar and T. S. Anantharaman, the congregation comprised a number of artists, male and female and students of Mumbai.

While at Aradhana celebrations, it is to be pointed out that Shanmukhananda presented in its Sangeethanjali to the Saint Bard of Tiruvayyaru, budding talents who knew no

inhibitions and thus could sing and play with ease. Niranjani (Veena), Yogesh Padmanabhan (Vocal), Lakshmi Prasad (Vocal), Swetha Kirshnan (Violin), G.R. Dev, Shilpa Krishnaswamy and Priya Balasubramanian (vocal) are some of talents who had exposure. The finale was marked with the rendition of select Utsava Sampradaya Keertanas and Anjaneya stuti by the faculty members of the Shanmukhananda Sangeetha Vidyalaya.

Following the Sabha's celebrations, the Faculty Members and Diplomates were presented by the NCPA in a two-hour Tyagarajanjali where they rendered with devotional fervour and in excellent synchrony the Pancharatnas, select Utsava Sampradaya Keertanas besides rare selections from the Saint's Lalgudi and Srirangam Pancharatna Kriti. Led by Kalyani Sarma, the team comprised Vocalists Prema Krishnan, Radha Santhanam, Renuka Rajan, Bhavani Srinivasan and Suganda Athreya; Violinists Visalam Vageswar and Prema Sundaresan; Vainika Mangalam Muthuswamy and percussionists T. S. Nandakumar (Mridangam), Vijay Natesan (Mridangam) and Shankar Lakshman (Ghatam).

Among the other Vaggeyakara Days mention may be made of the Bharatiyananjali in December in celebration of the Mahakavi's 116<sup>th</sup> Birth anniversary. The Sabha's selection of sister music and dance academies for paying homage to Bharatiyar was well appreciated and the students of Nritya Geetanjali, a music-dance institution under the able directorship of Guru Rajee Narayan gave a fine rendition in unison of the Kavi's creations in a thematic sequence. Followed the young students of Mulund Fine Arts Music School trained by Saraswati Subramaniam who exuded confidence. The other group was artistes of Nrityodya who made it a solo-cum-group renditions.

- Kinnari

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## Silver Jubilee - Music Triangle

Born on April 14<sup>th</sup>, 1973 - Tamil New Year's day - the Music Triangle has been the temple of

Classical Music, Dance and Drama for the music lovers of the Western suburbs of Mumbai. Credit goes to both the organisers and the members for successfully carrying the banner of this organisation through 25 years. Their perseverance rewarded them with a grand Silver Jubilee which was held at the M. M. Pupil's High School, Khar. They aptly celebrated it by honouring 5 music jewels of Mumbai - Smt. Kamala Krishnamurthy, Smt. T. R. Balamani, Shri T. S. Nandakumar, Smt. Rajee Narayan and Smt. Sulochana Rajendran. The crowning glory of the evening session was the litting vocal concert by Shri Nedunuri Krishnamurthy.

The Chief guest for the evening Shri V. Ranganathan (Additional Chief Secretary of Maharashtra) gave a short but knowledgeable speech, expressing his concern over the suppression of Kamatak Music by the influence of Western Pop Music. Added to this, the thin audience attendance only further deteriorated the situation. Hence he said that only our local Sabhas can be the torch-bearers for keeping the flame of Kamatak Music alight, just like a small lamp gives light after sunset.

The felicitation ceremony had celebrities honouring and blessing the awardees, Smt. T. R. Balamani, the well-known Sangeeta Vidushi from Central College of Camatic Music, Chennai - was honoured with the title "Ganakala Sudhakara". She is known for her mastery in Ragam - Tanam-Pallavi rendition. She has and is still grooming many young students (both vocalists and instrumentalists) into capable performers. She was fortunate to be honoured by Sangeetha Kalanidhi Nedunuri who is a great source of inspiration to her. Dr. Smt. Sulochana Rajendran, Director of Shanmukhananda Sangeetha Vidyalaya and Editor "SHANMUKHA" was awarded the title "Kalasevaka Sudhakara". A visiting faculty and examiner in the Department of Music, Mumbai University, Smt. Sulochana has been a dance and music critic for several (KINNARI) years now. It was indeed gratifying to see her receive the citation from Shri S. Seshadri (Hon. Sec. Shanmukhananda Sabha) though under the aegis of Music Triangle.

Smt. Kamala Krishnamurthy - a noted vocalist, was conferred the title "Sangeetha Kala

**Sudhakara".** An A-Grade A.I.R. artiste she has been instrumental in shaping the music and dance school of Music Triangle. Veteran Shri T.K. Govinda Rao honoured her.

Guru Smt. Rajee-Narayan - danseuse cum vocalist and Director of Nritya Geethanjali received the title "Nrityakala Sudhakara", from none other than Natyacharya Guru T.K. Mahalingam Pillai of Sri Rajarajeswari Bharatha Natya Kalamandir. An external examiner at the Nalanda Nrityakala Mahavidyalaya, Mumbai and M.S. University, Baroda, Smt. Rajee Narayan is a great Guru and has choreographed many dance-dramas. She has composed Bharata Natya Margams and published them in *Nritya Geetha Mala*.

Shri T. S. Nandakumar, a top ranking Mridangam Vidwan as well as a Guru, was honoured with the title "Shruti Laya Sudhakara". He has successfully groomed many percussion artistes into prominent accompanists and has also brought out 3 cassettes. "TSN - Percussive Arts -Centre" is his latest achievement.

The crowing glory of the evening was Shri Nedunuri Krishnamurthy's vocal recital. Starting off with Tyagaraja's "*Bhavanutha*" (Mohana) bordered with crisp swaras, he followed up with "*Thellaleru Rama*" (Dhenuka) and "*Chinnanate*" (Kalavati). "*Ninne Nammithinayya*" (Simhendramadhyamam) was niched out with a superb Alapana adorned with springing Brikas, lingering on Tara Rishabha with an enviable Sruti perfection. The Niraval of Pannagendra Sayana, followed by short-crisp Swara sequences were ably answered by Violinist Embar Kannan. Special mention must be made of the superb Alapana of Dwijavanti followed by Dikshitar's "*Akhilandeshwari*". Sivan's "*Ennathavam*" (Kapi), Annamacharya's "*Brahma Kadikina*" (Mukhari), Swati Thirunal's Dhanashri Tillana were other detectable pieces.

Special mention must be made of the rhythmic Thani avartanam by Shri K.V. Prasad (Mridangam) and Shri V. Suresh (Ghatam.)

Lalitha A. Bharadwaj

## "The Kitchen Band"

By Sreekumar

Think of the Kitchen in your house. What is the first thought that comes to mind? Mother making some tasty dish? Pressure cooker whistling away to glory? Steel vessels, big and small arranged neatly one above the other presenting a glow of symmetry? Ideas may gush, save music.

Kitchen and Music? Sounds strange, is it not? Certainly pots and pans banged together do not make music. Grinding stone, pounding pestle, coconut scraper do little to provide accompaniment. Or, do they? Why not? Look back through a few thousands of years when man was just evolving from the hunter-gatherer class.

Primitive man had no ready food available. He had to seek Nature's 'products', live on raw vegetables, herbs etc. He hunted the animal for meat. Strange as it might sound, the hunter's bow and arrow exposed man to various kinds of sounds. The origin of stringed instrument could be traced to this. It was his survival instincts that made him invent the drum. Flute was again man's genius in stumbling on wind instrument from bamboo. The sounds of animals, birds provided him the notes he needed to play. Rhythm was in his very being, the heart beat, the gait, the pace leading him on Laya. Thus evolved the synergy of sound and rhythm. Have these not evolved into a supreme art of music today? Then, why not kitchen be a source of orchestra?

In fact, in the evolution of musical instruments, the kitchen indirectly helped in the development of other musical instruments too. For example, the humble(?) coconut, which is one of the prime ingredients in any South Indian recipe, contributed immensely as can be seen below:

Ravanastram is believed to be the earliest of bowed instruments consisting of bamboo

stick as body to which two wooden pegs are fixed for tuning the strings and a half hallowed coconut shell as belly covered with a dried skin.

Similarly the veena, one of the most revered instruments, evolved thanks to a kitchen item. The pumpkin/gourd was dried, its inside scooped, and the hollow whole dried again. After polishing, it formed the base. It is a well known fact that the Veena family has various veenas like 1) Saraswathi Veena 2) Chitra Veena 3) Rudra Veena etc.

Thus, the kitchen has helped in the development of an entire array of musical instruments.

If the vegetables can play a vital role in music, can the vessels be far behind? Well, the vessels and other kitchen implements like the mortar, pestle, the muram (used for cleaning rice) the coconut scraper etc., had their own impact.

Imaginative and ever experimenting Smt. Soubhagya Ishwarayya of Bangalore found in them immense potential for a musical orchestra. Thus was born the Kitchen Band, called "Thudita Midita".

Now about Soubhagya. Right from her childhood, Soubhagya had a keen interest in music, drama and skits. Her academic pursuits did not deter her from cultivating her artistic instincts. Once, while she was working in the kitchen a thought flashed - so many implements at home, why not make use of them as musical implements! Thought led to action and experiment became a passion. The concept spread to ten more women. Result: "Thudita - Midita" was born. Soubhagya initially trained about nine young women in the art of making music from kitchen implements. She selected such songs that would go along well with these accompaniments.



"Thudita - Midita" in Kannada means hard work. Hard work in kitchen is made light with music. And women usually go about their kitchen chores with music in their mind and lips. While scraping coconut, cleaning rice or grinding chutney or masala, a woman hums a tune, Saubhagya is reported to have said. And that forms the basis of 'Thudita - Midita'.

It is an all-woman Band, for 'they give it the strength of character, the melody and the control that we require'

she has emphasized.

Another member of the orchestra, Leelavathi R. Prasad, Karnataka's Minister for Tourism and Cultural Affairs observed :

"There is a close connection between women and music. A mother puts a child to sleep singing a lullaby, a farm labourer sings a folk song while planting seeds, or harvesting..... Music and women are inseparable.

"These days, when a woman wants just to run away from her kitchen, we want to take her back and remind her that the kitchen is not just a work place, it is a health club too. The various household chores help in keeping one active, fit and trim. Also it is a place where our traditional music originates."

Besides these two, "Thudita-Midita" comprises a danseuse, a medical practitioner and housewives - all adding substance and sustenance.

The Kitchen Band, "Thudita - Midita" has held performances, live, at villages, towns and hold your breath - have travelled abroad too, performing at London, New York, New Jersey, Washington etc. Maybe by now they have 'conquered' other places too !

How do they carry abroad their load of accompaniments like grinding stone, the big pestle etc? Some structural modification - split and reassembling technique - has come handy to them.

"Thudita - Midita" has come out with an audio-cassette of their songs, and they are well appreciated. Offers for video and CD album of their songs have come their way. But they politely declined. Their purpose is not commercial gains, but propagation for preserving tradition.

From a cooking centre to developing 'musical instruments', kitchen has come a long way. What not can it add with modern gadgets! While tickling your palate Indian Kitchen can soothen your frayed nerves too.

Reference : "Ananda Vikatan"

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